

AS A MAN THINKS



AUGUSTUS THOMAS
(From a portrait bust by Robert I. Aitken)

AS A MAN THINKS

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

AUGUSTUS THOMAS



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CAST

of the

First presentation at the 39th Street Theatre,

New York, March 13th, 1911.

The characters are named in the order of their appearance.

VEDAH	CHARLOTTE IVES
Dr. SEELIG	JOHN MASON
HOLLAND, Seelig's footman	JAMES VINCENT
BUTLER	RALPH SAMONE
Mrs. CLAYTON	CHRYSTAL HERNE
JULIAN BURRILL	VINCENT SERRANO
BENJAMIN DE LOTA	WALTER HALE
FRANK CLAYTON	JOHN FLOOD
Mrs. SEELIG	AMELIA GARDNER
SUTTON, Clayton's footman	W. B. SADLER
Miss DOANE	GAIL KANE
Judge HOOVER	WILLIAM SAMPSON
DICK	RAYMOND HACKETT



ACT I.





AS A MAN THINKS

ACT ONE



CENE: Drawing Room of the residence of DOCTOR SEELIG. Two small sofas set at right angles to the fireplace form a kind of inglenook. At the outer ends of the sofas are two marble pedestals, each surmounted by an antique vase.

Time: An afternoon in late September. VEDAH SEELIG, a young girl, is at the piano and playing. After a few bars there is the sound of a door closing. VEDAH listens, then speaks.

Papa?

VEDAH.

Yes.

SEELIG.

Alone?

VEDAH.

SEELIG.

Alone. [*He enters from the hall. VEDAH meets and kisses him.*] Mother home?

VEDAH.

She is lying down.

SEELIG.

Is mother ill?

VEDAH.

Only resting.

SEELIG.

Ah—where is the tea?

VEDAH.

It isn't time.

SEELIG.

[*Regarding his watch.*] Quarter of five.

VEDAH.

[*Laughing.*] But no company.

SEELIG.

Company? My dear Vedah. Tea with me is not a function—it's a stimulant. [*He calls to a footman passing.*] Holland.

HOLLAND.

[*Pausing at doorway.*] Yes, sir.

SEELIG.

Tell the butler—some tea.

[*HOLLAND goes.*]

VEDAH.

Now, Papa.

SEELIG.

[*Affectionately imitating her.*] "Now, Papa." You want to drive me into dissipation.

VEDAH.

But the others will think they're late.

SEELIG.

I shan't grudge them that accuracy—they *are* late. I don't wonder at some of them, but I'm astonished at De Lota.

VEDAH.

[*Pause.*] De Lota?

SEELIG.

Yes.

VEDAH.

Is Mr. De Lota coming?

SEELIG.

I asked him to come.

VEDAH.

Why?

SEELIG.

Meet your artist—

VEDAH.

But, Papa—

SEELIG.

[*Playfully.*] Well, scold me.

VEDAH.

But—Papa.

SEELIG.

First to famish for a little tea—and then to be reprimanded for inviting a prospective son-in-law.

V E D A H.

I don't want Mr. Burrill and Mr. De Lota to meet.

S E E L I G.

Not meet—?

V E D A H.

Just yet.

S E E L I G.

Why not?

V E D A H.

I haven't told anybody of my engagement to Mr. De Lota.

S E E L I G.

Well?

V E D A H.

Well—he carries himself so—so—

S E E L I G.

Proudly?

V E D A H.

So much like a proprietor that it's hard to explain to others—strangers especially.

S E E L I G.

By "strangers especially" you mean Mr. Burrill?

V E D A H.

Yes.

S E E L I G.

Is Mr. Burrill's opinion important?

V E D A H.

His refinement is important.

S E E L I G.

Refinement?

V E D A H.

Yes—the quality that you admire in men—the quality that Mr. De Lota sometimes lacks.

S E E L I G.

When—for example?

V E D A H.

I've just told you.

S E E L I G.

Well, tell me again.

V E D A H.

When he gives the impression of—of—owning me.

S E E L I G.

[*Pause.*] But after all, isn't there a compliment in that?

V E D A H.

There's considerable annoyance in it.

S E E L I G.

Oh—[*A butler enters, gets tea table, which he places center and goes out.*] If you and De Lota announced your engagement his manner might—seem more natural—to strangers especially.

VEDAH.

I don't wish it announced.

SEELIG.

It was to have been announced in September, wasn't it?

VEDAH.

I know—but I'm waiting.

HOLLAND.

[*Appearing in doorway and announcing.*] Mrs. Clayton.[*Mrs. ELINOR CLAYTON, a blonde and blue-eyed woman of delicate charm and distinction enters.*]

VEDAH.

Elinor! [*Kisses her.*] How good of you to come so early.

ELINOR.

Doctor.

SEELIG.

[*Shaking hands with Mrs. CLAYTON.*] Elinor.

ELINOR.

[*Seeing the empty tea table.*] Am I the first?

VEDAH.

The very first.

SEELIG.

If I'm not—counted.

ELINOR.

You're first in every situation, Doctor. [To VEDAH.] I hope to have a moment with your father before the others call.

VEDAH.

Professionally?

ELINOR.

Don't I look the invalid? How's your mother?

VEDAH.

Fine, thank you.

ELINOR.

And to see her on a matter about as unimportant as my medical errand.

VEDAH.

I'll leave you together while I tell Mama.

[*She goes out.*]

ELINOR.

[*Sitting.*] When I came to see you last time—?

SEELIG.

Yes?

ELINOR.

You told me the truth about myself?

SEELIG.

My dear Mrs. Clayton.

ELINOR.

Of course you did as far as you told me anything, but I thought you might be withholding something.

SEELIG.

I don't know a woman in better physical condition. [*He takes a chair beside her.*]

ELINOR.

Well, I want you to give me something to make me sleep.

SEELIG.

Sleep!

ELINOR.

I wake about four in the morning and—stay awake.

SEELIG.

How often has this happened?

ELINOR.

Ever since I came to see you—and a week before that.

SEELIG.

'M—[*Pause.*] Anything troubling you?

ELINOR.

No.

SEELIG.

Do you stay wide awake or—only partly so?

ELINOR.

Awake.

SEELIG.

Thinking?

ELINOR.

Yes.

SEELIG.

Of what?

ELINOR.

Oh—everything.

SEELIG.

But principally—?

ELINOR.

Principally—[*Pause.*] That old trouble at Atlantic City.

SEELIG.

Anything in Frank's conduct to revive that?

ELINOR.

No—but—

SEELIG.

What?

ELINOR.

I think—sometimes that I felt that trouble more than any of us—even *I* thought I felt it.

SEELIG.

You forgave Frank, didn't you?

ELINOR.

Yes—but it was a good deal for a wife to overlook.

SEELIG.

You mean you *didn't* forgive him?

ELINOR.

I mean the hurt was deeper than I knew—deeper than I could know except as time taught me its depth.

SEELIG.

Your thoughts on that are what wake you in the early morning?

ELINOR.

And keep me awake.

SEELIG.

Well, let's talk about it.

ELINOR.

I don't wish to talk about it, Doctor.

[*She moves to a seat near the window.*]

SEELIG.

In surgery we sometimes find a condition where a wound has healed too quickly and on the surface only. The treatment is to re-open it entirely. A mental trouble has its analogy. Better talk of it. [*He goes to a seat beside her.*] Frank was foolish. Under the law you might have abandoned him to his folly. In that case, with his temperament—[*Pause.*] Two years? He'd have been—well—"a failure" is too gentle a description. As it is, consider his advancement in the two years—his development—power. All due to your wisdom, my dear Elinor—to your wisdom and forbearance—to your love for him—[*Pause.*] That sums it up—you do love him.

ELINOR.

[*Earnestly.*] Yes.

SEELIG.

Frank is important—he influences public opinion with his magazines and papers. He addresses an audience of two millions, let us say. In the great scheme of the world Frank is a factor—a big factor—isn't he?

ELINOR.

Yes—I suppose he is.

SEELIG.

[*Cheeringly.*] Well, there you are. Your abiding love for him made all the difference between success and failure. All the forces radiating from Frank really do so because of your loyalty at a supreme moment. That's a large commission, isn't it? The fates made you their chosen instrument—their deputy. If Frank hadn't needed help you couldn't have given it, could you?

ELINOR

Of course not.

SEELIG.

[*Rising energetically.*] Well, don't regret having been useful—be proud of it.

ELINOR.

But a man who has once committed such a fault—may do so again.

SEELIG.

[*Pleasantly.*] You're assuming that we learn nothing from our mistakes—we men.

ELINOR.

Well, do you?

SEELIG.

[*Smiling.*] As a physician—I'd hate to tell you how much.

ELINOR.

I couldn't go through it again.

SEELIG.

You won't have to.

ELINOR.

[*Going to SEELIG.*] And you won't give me anything for my insomnia?

SEELIG.

Isn't a point of view something?

ELINOR.

Yes, if I can take it.

SEELIG.

You did take it. I saw the care go out of those eyes—and the peace come into them.

ELINOR.

[*Pause.*] You're a dear. [*She gratefully and impulsively takes SEELIG's hand.*]

VEDAH.

May I come in?

SEELIG.

Yes.

[VEDAH enters.]

VEDAH.

Mama wants you to come up, Elinor.

ELINOR.

Yes—[*As VEDAH starts with her.*] Oh, I'll go alone.

VEDAH.

But don't desert me entirely.

[*ELINOR goes out.*]

SEELIG.

Mama not coming down?

VEDAH.

No.

[*The BUTLER enters with tea service—lighted lamp, etc., which he puts on the table and goes out.*]

SEELIG.

When did you first meet Mr. Burrill?

VEDAH.

With you—at his exhibition.

SEELIG.

That was in September.

VEDAH.

Yes.

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] Vedah, I want to help Mr. Burrill—

VEDAH.

He has a lot of talent.

SEELIG.

I'm going to take down my beautiful vases De Lota gave us. [*He caresses a vase on one of the pedestals.*]

VEDAH.

They're deadly—

SEELIG.

And put up Mr. Burrill's statuettes—

VEDAH.

That's helping ourselves.

SEELIG.

I'm going to enlist Clayton in Mr. Burrill's fight with the architects.

VEDAH.

That's "copy" for Clayton's.

SEELIG.

But Mr. Burrill is [*Pause.*] not a Jew.

VEDAH.

[*Pouring tea.*] There's no race nor religion to art, is there?

SEELIG.

There frequently is to the artist. [*Tenderly.*] Careful, my pet. Remember—your happiness will be—with your own race.

[VEDAH gives SEELIG *his tea.*]

HOLLAND.

[*Appears and announces.*] Mr. Burrill.

VEDAH.

Show Mr. Burrill in.

[HOLLAND *goes.*

SEELIG.

Second call this week, isn't it?

VEDAH.

Yes.

SEELIG.

You know, he has *some rights.*

VEDAH.

You mean—?

SEELIG.

His heart—

[*Enter BURRILL, a young man of twenty-eight years.*

VEDAH.

Good afternoon.

BURRILL.

How do you do? [*They shake hands.*]

SEELIG.

How are you?

BURRILL.

Fine, thank you.

SEELIG.

Any more news of the court house decoration?

BURRILL.

Nothing different.

VEDAH.

How will you take your tea, Mr. Burrill?

BURRILL.

Submissively. I take it only because I admire its preparation.

SEELIG.

We still struggle along with our vases. [*He indicates the vases on the pedestals.*]

BURRILL.

I understand your reluctance to move them.

SEELIG.

Only waiting for your statuettes.

BURRILL.

They haven't come?

SEELIG.

No.

VEDAH.

I think they did, Papa. Something dreadfully heavy came this morning.

SEELIG.

Well!

VEDAH.

I was afraid to unpack them.

BURRILL.

[*Laughing.*] They're bronze.

[VEDAH gives BURRILL his tea. She then goes to the door and pushes the electric button.]

SEELIG.

Do you know Clayton—the publisher—Clayton's magazine?

BURRILL.

Reputation.

SEELIG.

He's a live wire—Clayton.

BURRILL.

Yes.

[*The BUTLER enters.*]

VEDAH.

The expressman brought a package this morning?

BUTLER.

Yes, M'm—two statues.

VEDAH.

How do you know?

BUTLER.

I opened it.

VEDAH.

You opened it!

BUTLER.

[*Looking to SEELIG.*] Mrs. Seelig told me to open it.

VEDAH.

Mama told him to open it. Would you have thought it?

SEELIG.

[*To BURRILL.*] How was the box addressed?

BURRILL.

To you.

SEELIG.

[*Dryly.*] I *would* have thought it—yes—

VEDAH.

Bring the statuettes here.

BUTLER.

They are in Mrs. Seelig's room.

VEDAH.

I'll go with you and get them—Excuse me—

[VEDAH and the BUTLER go out.]

SEELIG.

I've asked Clayton to drop in on his way uptown.

BURRILL.

I shall be glad to meet him.

SEELIG.

Mrs. Clayton is here. Have you met *her*?

BURRILL.

No.

SEELIG.

She was a Miss Hoover. Judge Hoover's daughter.

BURRILL.

[*Nodding.*] The newspapers keep one pretty well informed.

SEELIG.

Unfortunate, that notoriety.

BURRILL.

Can't be agreeable.

SEELIG.

Prosperity tries a man more than poverty does—

BURRILL.

So I've read—

SEELIG.

Clayton makes two millions a year from his publications—

BURRILL.

Think of it!

S E E L I G.

His temptations were proportionate to his sudden success and—well, she is a most sensible woman.

B U R R I L L.

Forgave everything I believe.

S E E L I G.

Not too meekly—I assure you—but—they have a little boy and—as I say—she is a most sensible woman. As for Clayton—well I guess Clayton is sufficiently contrite.

VEDAH and the BUTLER re-enter, the BUTLER carries two bronze figurines.

V E D A H.

[*Indicating a pedestal.*] I think the *girl* on that pillar—
And the man on that one—

S E E L I G.

I'd put the girl here—

V E D A H.

Why?

S E E L I G.

See it first. [*He takes the female figure from the BUTLER who places the male figure on the floor and goes out.*]

V E D A H.

She's too darling for anything.

S E E L I G.

[*Placing the statuette on the tea table.*] Your figures are even handsomer here, than at the exhibition.

BURRILL.

The room helps them.

SEELIG.

[*With the statuette which he displays.*] Look, Vedah! Isn't she graceful in every view?

VEDAH.

She is.

SEELIG.

Do you know your nymph reminds me of those stunning little things by Theodore Riviere?

BURRILL.

That's very interesting. The girl that posed for this was a model for Riviere.

SEELIG.

[*Playfully.*] Well, there you are—I shall set up as a connoisseur.

VEDAH.

You promised to bring her photograph.

BURRILL.

I have brought it.

SEELIG.

[*Half anxiously.*] But—posing?

BURRILL.

Oh, no—street costume.

SEELIG.

Oh—

BURRILL.

There—[*He takes a photograph from his pocket and hands it to VEDAH.*]

SEELIG.

[*Sitting comfortably.*] I don't know why sculpture is so much more modest than photography—but—it is.

BURRILL.

The artist is a mediator.

SEELIG.

Does that explain it?

BURRILL.

Doesn't it?

SEELIG.

I don't know—I've never been an artist.

VEDAH.

Nor a photographer.

SEELIG.

Nor, for that matter, a beautiful female model.

VEDAH.

[*Carrying the photograph to SEELIG.*] See, Papa—isn't that face angelic?

SEELIG.

It is—It is—[*To BURRILL.*] And I dare say the lady herself was—[*Indicates abandon.*]

BURRILL.

No—she wasn't a bad sort. She has a right to the face.

VEDAH.

[*With girlish enthusiasm.*] Those eyes, Papa! And that beautiful nose and mouth. Why, anybody could *love* her.

BURRILL.

Well—a good many did.

VEDAH.

Of whom does she make you—think?

SEELIG.

Some player.

VEDAH.

Duse.

[SEELIG *nods.*]

BURRILL.

The resemblance is often remarked.

VEDAH.

She should have been an actress.

BURRILL.

[*Shaking his head.*] She tried acting and failed.

V E D A H.

Did you see her?

B U R R I L L.

Before my time. Antoine gave her a very good chance in his theatre, but—she was only a model.

S E E L I G.

Yes, if Antoine couldn't make her act.

[VEDAH returns the photograph to BURRILL.

B U R R I L L.

But—a fine girl for all that—warm hearted—most grateful to the man who had got her the chance.

V E D A H.

Well, if anybody got me a place in Antoine's theatre I'd be grateful. [*She returns to the statuette examining it closely.*] I'm sorry we can't see her mouth.

S E E L I G.

You can't? [*Also examines the statuette.*

B U R R I L L.

No—our early Greeks played with those pipes tied to the face.

V E D A H.

I'm going to put her on her pedestal.

B U R R I L L.

Let me. [*He takes the statuette from the table.*]

VEDAH.

Take your old vases, Papa.

BURRILL.

Old vases!

SEELIG.

[*Taking the vases from the pedestals.*] The finest specimens in America, Mr. Burrill.

BURRILL.

Exquisite—where did you find them.

SEELIG.

Benjamin De Lota brought them from Genoa. De Lota does art and music for Clayton!

BURRILL.

Charming.

SEELIG.

I shall promote them to my library. [*He goes toward the door.*] I—I regard them somewhat as a bribe.

BURRILL.

A bribe?

VEDAH.

[*Expostulating.*] Papa!

SEELIG.

De Lota gave them to me—and in the same interview asked me to—to become his father-in-law—an intimate and antique relation—a time-honored method. [*Regards vases.*] Ah, well. [SEELIG goes out through the library door.]

BURRILL.

[*Dashed with the news.*] His father-in-law.

VEDAH.

You hadn't heard? [BURRILL *shakes head, avoiding her gaze.*] Why, yes. [*Pause.*] May I pour you some more tea?

BURRILL.

No, thank you. [*He walks away.*]

EDAH.

Do you know Mr. De Lota?

BURRILL.

No.

VEDAH.

He wrote that beautiful notice in Clayton's about your work.

BURRILL.

[*Moodily at window.*] I know his articles, of course.

VEDAH.

Shan't we put up the dancing man too?

BURRILL.

[*Rousing himself.*] Let me. [*He puts the male figurine on the second pedestal.*]

VEDAH.

They go well there, don't they?

BURRILL.

Very well.

VEDAH.

Attendant spirits of my fireside.

BURRILL.

They are honored.

VEDAH.

Do -ou know why I like them?

BURRILL.

Why?

VEDAH.

[*Impressively.*] They are just a girl and a man—nothing more—with their pan pipes—their freedom—the joy of existence—

BURRILL.

[*Forcing a gayety.*] That sounds like paganism.

VEDAH.

I am a pagan.

BURRILL.

And the gentleman?

VEDAH.

Mr. De Lota?

BURRILL.

Yes.

VEDAH.

Mr. De Lota—is a Jew.

BURRILL.

[*Pause.*] Well, I'm a pagan myself—a Walter Pater pagan.

VEDAH.

Oh, yes. I, too, must have the sunshine, the poetry, the festivals.

BURRILL.

And you saw somewhat of that in my little figures?

VEDAH.

Yes—

BURRILL.

You hinted as much that day at the exhibition—thousands had walked by and looked at their catalogues—but you—only you—interpreted them. I can't tell you how much that meant to me.

VEDAH.

I wonder if you know—that we—[*Pause.*

BURRILL.

We what?

VEDAH.

Were never introduced to each other.

BURRILL.

I hug that to my memory.

VEDAH.

A friend offered—but I fibbed. I said I *knew* you already. An introduction would have been—well—[*Rises impatiently.*]

BURRILL.

What?

VEDAH.

A straight-jacket on your dancer. [*She pauses and comes near him.*] But it has been wrong to make you call here, hasn't it?

BURRILL.

Has it?

VEDAH.

Tell me.

BURRILL.

[*With renewed fervor.*] Not if they are really to be the attendant spirits.

VEDAH.

[*Evading his manner and going to the first statuette.*] Why did you get her a place in Antoine's theatre?

BURRILL.

I didn't.

VEDAH.

Then how do you know she was grateful?

BURRILL.

The man who got her the place—afterwards committed—committed a crime and was on trial in Paris. Mimi had

then become a model and was posing for Riviere and me and other artists. She dragged us—Antoine—Riviere—me—everybody—to the court house in a frenzied effort to free him.

VEDAH.

Maybe she loved him.

BURRILL.

I think not—simply gratitude for his interest. But that's a rare virtue.

[MRS. ELINOR CLAYTON *returns to the room.*]

VEDAH.

Mrs. Clayton, may I present Mr. Julian Burrill, the sculptor.

ELINOR.

Mr. Burrill. [*She gives BURRILL her hand.*]

VEDAH.

Mrs. Clayton is *the* Mrs. Clayton.

ELINOR.

You must look as though you knew.

BURRILL.

My struggle is to conceal, my knowledge—

ELINOR.

[*To VEDAH.*] All that you've told me of him seems to be true.

BURRILL.

So quickly?

VEDAH.

One or two lumps? And look at my Greek playmates.

ELINOR.

[*Seeing the statuettes.*] Charming. [*To VEDAH.*] Two please. [*She turns to the dancing nymph.*] Think of wanting to vote when one may do that.

BURRILL.

Exactly.

VEDAH.

And cream?

ELINOR.

Lemon please. [*To BURRILL.*] You're a dangerous man.

BURRILL.

I?

ELINOR.

With that degree of flattery.

BURRILL.

That's a servile portrait.

ELINOR.

Really?

VEDAH.

Show Mrs. Clayton the photograph.

BURRILL.

[*Passing the photo to ELINOR.*] Model.

ELINOR.

I know this woman.

VEDAH.

Resembles Duse.

ELINOR.

In Paris.

BURRILL.

Yes.

ELINOR.

She writes for the papers.

BURRILL.

I hardly think writes for the papers.

ELINOR.

French papers—yes. And she represents Mr. Clayton's publications.

BURRILL.

I shouldn't have thought it.

VEDAH.

You've met her?

ELINOR.

A moment—yes—in this same hat and gown. [*She hands the photograph to VEDAH.*] Mr. Clayton said she spoke no English though she understood it fairly. Frank introduced her as a writer—she smiled assent—

B U R R I L L.

[*Reclaiming the photograph.*] Possible.

H O L L A N D.

[*Entering and announcing.*] Mr. De Lota.

[BENJAMIN DE LOTA *enters. He is a tall—aggressive and intellectual Spanish Jew of thirty-five years or so.*

[HOLLAND *goes out.*

V E D A H.

Good afternoon.

D E L O T A.

[*Taking her hand with much manner.*] Vedah.

V E D A H.

Mrs. Clayton you know?

D E L O T A.

Yes—how are you.

[ELINOR *nods to him.*

V E D A H.

And let me introduce Mr. Burrill.

D E L O T A.

Mr. Burrill. [*The men shake hands.*

B U R R I L L.

[*Seriously.*] I've an impression of having met you in Paris.

DE LOTA.

I'm often there.

VEDAH.

Some tea?

DE LOTA.

Not any, thank you. [*To ELINOR.*] I thought Frank was to be here?

ELINOR.

He is.

DE LOTA.

Good. [*To BURRILL.*] Doctor Seelig has told Frank—Mrs. Clayton's husband—about your row with the architects.

BURRILL.

I hardly call it a row.

DE LOTA.

Better call it a row and make it a row or you'll never get a chance at the big sculpture. Once let a ring do all the work and you young fellows can starve or be journeymen. Thank God, Clayton's a Westerner, believes in the open shop.

BURRILL.

We want his influence, but not to involve him.

DE LOTA.

Magazines must print something. [*He goes to ELINOR.*] Frank will clasp him and his row to our bosom with hooks of steel, won't he?

ELINOR

How do you spell steel?

DE LOTA.

I follow the market. [*To VEDAH.*] Where's Papa?

VEDAH.

Finding the post of honor in his library for your vases.

DE LOTA.

[*Noting the pedestals.*] Oh—yours?

BURRILL.

Yes.

DE LOTA.

[*Regarding the dancing girl.*] Charming.

ELINOR.

Does she impress you as a co-worker?

DE LOTA.

Co-worker—no—co-respondent—yes.

ELINOR.

I mean as a fellow member of the profession?

DE LOTA.

Which profession?

ELINOR.

Journalism.

DE LOTA.

By nothing except the willingness to increase her circulation.

VEDAH.

Mrs. Clayton says the lady represents your magazine in Paris.

DE LOTA.

I dare say I'm dull—but—?

BURRILL.

Not the statuette—the model—Mimi Chardenet.

DE LOTA.

Mimi Chardenet—Europa?

BURRILL.

Yes.

DE LOTA.

Was Mimi your model? [BURRILL *nods*.] I might have known it. [*He turns admiringly to the bronze.*]

ELINOR.

Why do you say "Europa?"

DE LOTA.

Mimi *was* "Europa" at the Quat'z Arts ball this year.

ELINOR.

Europa—mythological, isn't it?

DE LOTA.

Yes.

VEDAH.

[*As ELINOR looks to her.*] I remember something of Europa in our literature class—must be all right.

DE LOTA.

Disappointingly proper.

ELINOR.

But the lady at the ball?

DE LOTA.

Costume—well, somewhat less than this.

ELINOR.

Less?

DE LOTA.

[*Nodding.*] Without the pipes—mounted on a sleek black bull which the students led about the ball room.

ELINOR.

Show Mr. De Lota the photograph.

DE LOTA.

[*Taking photo from BURRILL.*] That's Mimi.

ELINOR.

Let me have it again.

[*DE LOTA gives ELINOR the photograph.*]

BURRILL.

Can she possibly have also written?

DE LOTA.

Mimi a blue stocking? I leave it to you.

ELINOR.

Frank knows this woman.

DE LOTA.

Your husband?

ELINOR.

Yes.

DE LOTA.

Of course. I introduced him.

ELINOR.

I was sure of it.

[DE LOTA *is startled by* ELINOR'S *seriousness.*

SEELIG.

[*Calling from the library.*] Vedah.

VEDAH.

Yes, Papa.

SEELIG.

You and Mr. Burrill come here a moment.

VEDAH.

[*To BURRILL.*] He wants us—[*To others.*] He doesn't know you are here.

DE LOTA.

Don't disturb him on my account.

VEDAH.

Your vases anyway—I expect—

BURRILL.

[*Excusing his going.*] Pardon.

[ELINOR *nods.* VEDAH and BURRILL *go to the library.*]

DE LOTA.

[*Alone with ELINOR.*] Well?

ELINOR.

Well?

DE LOTA.

We do meet, don't we?

ELINOR.

Vedah didn't tell me you were to be here.

DE LOTA.

The Doctor invited me.

ELINOR.

Meetings of this kind—I can't help.

DE LOTA.

But you won't ask me to your home.

ELINOR.

Frank asks you.

DE LOTA.

I'll come when *you* ask me.

ELINOR.

I shan't ask you.

DE LOTA.

Why?

ELINOR.

[*Pause.*] You know why.

DE LOTA.

I don't.

ELINOR.

[*Going to the statuette.*] This model—you say you introduced Frank to her?

DE LOTA.

Yes.

ELINOR.

When?

DE LOTA.

This year.

ELINOR.

Where?

DE LOTA.

Paris—Quat'z Arts ball. It was her pose as Europa that caught—Frank's—caught his eye.

ELINOR.

I remember the newspaper comment the day after. On that particular night—Frank went to a meeting of the American Chamber of Commerce.

DE LOTA.

So did I. At those student dances the interesting things don't begin until midnight.

ELINOR.

I see.

DE LOTA.

[*Insistently.*] But you're changing the subject. Frank and I see a good deal of each other at the office. He begins to think it strange I don't accept his invitations to the house.

ELINOR.

Why haven't you?

DE LOTA.

He said he wanted me to call, to know you better—[*Smiles.*] I saw you'd told him nothing—so—I await *your* invitation.

ELINOR.

You were away when Frank and I first met. [DE LOTA *nods.*] Away when we married—[DE LOTA *nods.*] I suppose all husbands ask their wives if they've ever cared for anyone else—[*She leaves the fireplace and goes to the window.*]

DE LOTA.

[*Pause.*] And you said—?

ELINOR.

I said no. Smile if you wish but—I hadn't loved anyone as I loved him.

DE LOTA.

[*Following.*] Naturally.

ELINOR.

So what I said was true.

DE LOTA.

By the feminine standard—yes.

ELINOR.

That's one of the things I always disliked in you, Ben.

DE LOTA.

What?

ELINOR.

Your talk of feminine standards and masculine standards. In morals there is just one standard.

DE LOTA.

[*Laughing.*] Were there *many* other things you disliked in me?

ELINOR.

This is one other.

DE LOTA.

What?

ELINOR.

Your mood of cat-like cruelty.

DE LOTA.

Cruelty—cat-like?

ELINOR.

Yes—cruelty—and it goes with your smile. That is like a cat's—your manner is like a cat's. When you play the piano it is a cat walking on the keys.

DE LOTA.

There were times, however, when you asked me to play.

ELINOR.

There are times when I like cats.

DE LOTA.

Elinor—[*He starts impulsively toward her.*]

ELINOR.

[*Avoiding him.*] No—

DE LOTA.

[*Regarding her with admiration.*] Damn it—we'd have been happy together—you and I.

ELINOR.

No.

DE LOTA.

The history of my people supports me.

ELINOR.

Spanish history?

D E L O T A.

Jewish history. Our girls have often been unhappy when they've married outside. But our men—have absorbed the women of other races.

E L I N O R.

You mustn't talk to me in that strain. [*She walks angrily away.*]

D E L O T A.

A man in sentimental bankruptcy may at least enumerate his assets. We *would* have been happy.

E L I N O R.

No.

D E L O T A.

One of us would have been happy, of that—I'm sure. I loved you, Elinor, because you were a queen—me you sacrificed because—[*Pause.*] I was a Jew.

E L I N O R.

And because you are a Jew you still speak of it.

D E L O T A.

Exactly.

E L I N O R.

But you must cease to speak of it.

D E L O T A.

Not while you listen.

ELINOR.

[*Starting toward the door.*] I will never be alone with you again.

DE LOTA.

[*Interposing.*] Then I must tell you now.

ELINOR.

[*Commandingly.*] Play something or I shall leave.

DE LOTA.

Thank you—I prefer this way myself. [*He laughs and goes to the piano which he play brilliantly and with passion.*]

[SEELIG, VEDAH and BURRILL re-enter in turn and join ELINOR.]

[*Enter HOLLAND who whispers to SEELIG. SEELIG goes out with HOLLAND and returns with CLAYTON as piano ceases.*]

VEDAH.

[*Meeting CLAYTON and shaking his hand.*] We feared you were forgetting us.

CLAYTON.

Never—[*He nods to his wife.*] my dear.

VEDAH.

Mr. Clayton, may I present Mr. Julian Burrill.

CLAYTON.

[*To BURRILL.*] I thought you an older man.

V E D A H.

He is. [BURRILL *laughs.*]

C L A Y T O N.

In the Salon six years ago, weren't you?

B U R R I L L.

Yes.

C L A Y T O N.

Medal, if I remember?

[BURRILL *nods.* CLAYTON *turns to SEELIG with a shrug.*

S E E L I G.

No justice at all in the discrimination of these architects.

E L I N O R.

[*Calmly.*] That is Mr. Burrill's latest work. [*She indicates the dancing figurine.*

C L A Y T O N.

Charming.

E L I N O R.

Do you recognize the lady?

C L A Y T O N.

[*Playfully.*] I'd like to.

E L I N O R.

Mimi Chardenet.

CLAYTON.

Chardenet?

ELINOR.

You must remember—rode the black bull at the Quat'z Arts ball.

[*A swift glance passes between DE LOTA and CLAYTON.*]

CLAYTON.

Ah, indeed. [*To BURRILL.*] From that celebrated model.

[*BURRILL nods.*]

ELINOR.

[*To BURRILL.*] Let Mr. Clayton see the photograph.

BURRILL.

I can't think it would interest him.

[*CLAYTON tries to engage SEELIG in conversation.*]

ELINOR.

Oh, yes. [*To CLAYTON.*] Frank! [*CLAYTON turns to her.*] Look at this photograph—please. [*To BURRILL.*]

BURRILL.

[*Reluctantly yielding the photograph.*] Miss Seelig had some curiosity about it.

CLAYTON.

Oh, yes.

ELINOR.

Mr. Burrill was inclined to doubt that the lady represented your magazines.

CLAYTON.

[*Evasively.*] Oh, that arrangement was never completed—discussed but—[*He returns the photograph to BURRILL.*]

DE LOTA.

[*Trying to help the strained situation.*] Mimi had more than one side to her.

ELINOR.

[*Regarding the bronze.*] So it appears.

DE LOTA.

I mean she could think. Antoine told me that she caught the meaning of a line—as quickly as any woman that ever came into his theatre.

VEDAH.

[*Starting at the name.*] Antoine?

DE LOTA.

Yes, Antoine the manager. I got her a place in his company.

VEDAH.

When was that?

DE LOTA.

Oh, nine or ten years ago before she posed professionally.

[VEDAH looks to BURRILL who avoids her inquiry.]

CLAYTON.

She said she could write of the theatre.

ELINOR.

Well—I must go.

VEDAH.

Really? Am I to be the only woman in this council of war?

ELINOR.

Leave it *all* to the men, my dear.

CLAYTON.

The car's at the door—take it if you wish.

ELINOR.

[*Frigidly.*] I'll walk, thank you. [*Pause.*] Mr. Burrill, I'm very glad to have seen you.

BURRILL.

Thank you.

ELINOR.

And your model—well—a delightful reminder of Paris, Mr. De Lota. [DE LOTA turns to her.] As you also know the lady, Mr. De Lota—you shall tell me more of her. I hope you'll call on us. [*She gives DE LOTA her hand.*]

DE LOTA.

I've been promising Mr. Clayton to do so.

ELINOR.

You must—[*Going with VEDAH to the hall—*] You'll bring Mr. Burrill to see me too?

VEDAH.

Delighted, Mrs. Clayton.

[VEDAH and ELINOR go out.]

DE LOTA.

I put my foot in it—but—hang it, I was completely off guard. Mrs. Clayton said "Why Frank knows this woman" and I blurted "of course—I introduced him." [*Turns to BURRILL for confirmation.*]

CLAYTON.

Forget it.

SEELIG.

Trouble?

CLAYTON.

En promenade with the girl—Elinor met us. I said business.

SEELIG.

[*Seriously.*] 'Mmm. Too bad after—the—the other trouble so soon.

CLAYTON.

Damn it—a man can't go to Paris and live on bread and milk. I've got to know the world I live in. I publish three magazines and a metropolitan newspaper.

SEELIG.

The wife met you walking with the woman?

CLAYTON.

That's all—[*To DE LOTA with some anxiety.*] You told her nothing more?

DE LOTA.

[*Expostulating.*] My dear Frank—

CLAYTON.

[*Relieved.*] Oh, I can fix it.

[VEDAH enters.]

SEELIG.

Well—shall we discuss this business of the architects?

CLAYTON.

Yes.

SEELIG.

Suppose we go into the library—I've your papers there, Mr. Burrill.

CLAYTON.

Yes.

[*The men start to the library.*]

VEDAH.

Mr. Burrill! I'll send Mr. Burrill immediately.

BURRILL.

[*To SEELIG.*] You permit me?

[*SEELIG pauses, regards VEDAH intently—*]

[*DE LOTA, CLAYTON and SEELIG go out.*]

V E D A H.

[*In sudden alarm.*] He is the man—I saw your face when he said he had introduced this girl to Antoine.

B U R R I L L.

Antoine's name startled me—that was all—and—

V E D A H.

You thought you'd seen *him* in Paris.

B U R R I L L.

Probably did—many times.

V E D A H.

You think you saw him in that court room—on trial for a crime.

B U R R I L L.

[*Evasively.*] No—no.

V E D A H.

The man on trial had spoken to Antoine for the girl.

B U R R I L L.

A dozen men may have done that. Engagements in the theatre require many introductions.

V E D A H.

I read the doubt in your heart. You're not the conventional coward that most men are—tell me. I am promised to *marry* Benjamin De Lota—doesn't that mean anything to *you*?

BURRILL.

Mean anything!—[*He starts impulsively toward VEDAH, stops and after a moment's effort at self-control says calmly and tenderly.*] I love you! [VEDAH *inhales quickly, her glance falls before BURRILL's look, she turns irresolutely toward the room into which DE LOTA has gone—a pause.*

CURTAIN.

ACT II



ACT TWO



CENE: Lounging room of MR. FRANK CLAYTON's house. The walls are covered with green canvas on which is a profusion of illustrations furnished to CLAYTON's magazines by various artists.

The room, square and shallow and low, is furnished in mahogany and leather. Two five foot 'arches' on either side of centre open to rooms back. That at right shows hallway in red, with staircase leading to second story. That at left shows music room in yellow with Chippendale furniture and pictures in gilt frames. A sofa above fireplace which is at right, stands at right angle to fireplace.. A low table for tobacco is at end of this sofa. On this table is a big reading lamp. A large writing table is at back. A smaller table near the window at left side has a desk telephone.

At Rise of Curtain the stage is empty. MRS. SEELIG and VEDAH and ELINOR enter from the dining room by a door above the fireplace. They are in evening gowns.

MRS. SEELIG.

Vedah.

VEDAH.

Mama?

MRS. SEELIG.

[To ELINOR.] Mr. Clayton's found my gloves, but my handkerchief is gone.

ELINOR.

[Starting back to dining room.] I'll get it.

MRS. SEELIG.

Let Vedah.

ELINOR.

No trouble.

[She goes out.]

VEDAH.

See this picture, Mama.

MRS. SEELIG.

Which?

VEDAH.

This.

MRS. SEELIG.

What is it?

VEDAH.

At Jerusalem. 'The Wailing Wall.'

MRS. SEELIG.

Poor fellows. It's dreadful to take religion so seriously.

[ELINOR enters.]

ELINOR.

Mr. De Lota is bringing your handkerchief—wouldn't let me have it.

MRS. SEELIG.

An excuse to join us.

[DE LOTA enters from the dining room waving a lace handkerchief playfully.]

DE LOTA.

Found! Lady's handkerchief—no marks.

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Extending her hand.*] Thank you.

DE LOTA.

[*Withholding the handkerchief.*] On one consideration. [*To ELINOR.*] Mrs. Seelig says the talking machine has spoiled—Celeste Aida—for her ears—[*To MRS. SEELIG.*] If you think you are mistaken when you hear Caruso to-night—you must stand up and wave this to me as a signal of surrender.

MRS. SEELIG.

I agree—[*Takes handkerchief.*] because we shall be too late to hear that solo.

DE LOTA.

Sharp practice, madam.

ELINOR.

Are we so late!

VEDAH.

Oh—let's not hurry.

DE LOTA.

This room attracts me more than the opera. [*He regards the drawings on the wall.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

Originals, aren't they?

ELINOR.

Yes. They were in the offices of the magazine when Mr. Clayton bought it.

DE LOTA.

Here's one by Frost. I used to watch for his sketches when I was a boy.

[SUTTON, the Clayton butler, enters with coffee.

MRS. SEELIG.

[*At another drawing.*] And Remington—[*To the butler.*] Thank you—[*Takes coffee.*

[CLAYTON and BURRILL come from the dining room.

CLAYTON.

You found the cigars?

DE LOTA.

I'll take a cigarette. [*He does so.*

ELINOR.

[*To BURRILL.*] Here's a libretto of Aida. Find that passage of which you spoke.

BURRILL.

There were several.

MRS. SEELIG.

Our coffee won't interfere with your cigars.

DE LOTA.

Do you mind?

ELINOR.

This room is dedicated to nicotine. [*To MRS. SEELIG.*] Besides, we're going to take Mr. De Lota to the piano.

DE LOTA.

Are you?

ELINOR.

[*To VEDAH.*] Aren't we?

VEDAH.

We are.

BURRILL.

Here's one place—[*His pencil breaks*]. Ah!

CLAYTON.

[*Offering a pencil attached to his watch chain.*]
Here.

BURRILL.

[*Giving libretto to CLAYTON.*] Just mark that passage—"my native land," etc. [*To ELINOR.*] Now follow that when Aida sings Italian and note how the English stumbles.

ELINOR.

Thank you. [*To CLAYTON as she takes book.*] Will you order the car?

CLAYTON.

I have done so.

ELINOR.

[*To DE LOTA.*] Come.

[ELINOR, MRS. SEELIG, VEDAH and DE LOTA go to the music room by the arch left.]

BURRILL.

[*To CLAYTON with whom he is alone.*] See here—I've an idea you'd go to the opera if it weren't for me.

CLAYTON.

My boy, a box at the opera is the blackmail—a man pays for a quiet evening at home.

BURRILL.

[*Laughing.*] Many men do go.

CLAYTON.

And sleep on the rear chairs. No! I planned to stay home—you're part of the excuse. [SUTTON enters with a note.] Excuse me. [Pause. Reads superscription on the note.] Vedah—[BURRILL gets a cigarette. CLAYTON goes to the door of the music room and calls.] Vedah [VEDAH comes to him.] They pursue you even here. [He laughingly gives VEDAH the note which she opens and quickly scans. SUTTON goes.]

VEDAH.

[*Speaking to the ladies and DE LOTA who are not in view.*] Papa will be late. Mrs. Clayton musn't wait for us.

CLAYTON.

Our car carries seven.

[ELINOR and MRS. SEELIG appear in the doorway—DE LOTA follows, they enter.]

ELINOR.

I'm sure we can make room.

CLAYTON.

Make room! You're only four!

ELINOR.

Mr. De Lota and I are to stop for the Underwoods.

MRS. SEELIG.

And we have our cousins Friedman.

DE LOTA.

I can take a taxi.

VEDAH.

That won't help—Papa is *coming* here—but later.

MRS. SEELIG.

You go ahead, Mrs. Clayton.

VEDAH.

Yes.

ELINOR.

[*To DE LOTA.*] What do you think?

DE LOTA.

Any time for me—but—the Underwoods—!

[*SUTTON enters.*]

SUTTON.

The automobile.

[*ELINOR nods; SUTTON goes.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

It's all settled—you go. So much formality. [*She and CLAYTON go to music room.*]

ELINOR.

Take this for me. [*Hands libretto to DE LOTA.*]

VEDAH.

[*Going out with ELINOR.*] Papa will probably be here before you get away.

[*ELINOR goes upstairs talking with VEDAH. They disappear.*]

BURRILL.

[*As DE LOTA starts to music room.*] Mr. De Lota—were you in Paris eight years ago?

DE LOTA.

[*Returning.*] Yes—and twenty-eight years ago—I'm there every year.

BURRILL.

Did you ever—visit the Cour d'Assizes?

DE LOTA.

Occasionally—if some interesting case were on—

BURRILL.

I remember one very interesting case—A husband punished his wife—and also her lover—by imprisonment.

DE LOTA.

The French law *has* that absurd possibility.

BURRILL.

The lover was sentenced to a year's imprisonment.

DE LOTA.

He was fortunate—the court in its discretion might have given him two years.

BURRILL.

You are more minutely informed on the subject than the average American.

DE LOTA.

I am more minutely informed on *most* subjects than the average American. I know somewhat of character—of men's temperaments and motives, Mr. Burrill. And your interest in my life at Paris is very serviceable just now.

BURRILL.

Indeed!

DE LOTA.

Indeed yes. I've been at a loss to understand the change in Miss Seelig's deportment toward myself. I was charging it to your superior attraction. I see it was due to your power of insinuation.

BURRILL.

I have insinuated nothing about you.

DE LOTA.

You have been direct?

BURRILL.

I've avoided discussing your life in Paris.

DE LOTA.

That is wise, Mr. Burrill. In fact, you could do only one thing that would be more wise.

BURRILL.

Yes?

DE LOTA.

Avoid discussing *any* of my affairs.

BURRILL.

My *instinct* is to do that.

DE LOTA.

Thank you! [*He turns away.*]

BURRILL.

[*Following.*] Except with one person.

DE LOTA.

You mean—the lady?

BURRILL.

I mean you. I expect to discuss them with *you* rather frankly.

DE LOTA.

I shall be pleased. [*He throws the libretto on the table and confronts BURRILL.*]

ELINOR.

[*Entering.*] Ready, Mr. De Lota?

DE LOTA.

[*Smiling.*] You excuse me?

[BURRILL *nods.*

[DE LOTA *disappears in the hallway.*

ELINOR.

I wish you were going with us.

BURRILL.

I wish I were.

[CLAYTON *re-enters from the music room.*

ELINOR.

You'll see Dick, won't you?

CLAYTON.

Yes.

ELINOR.

He's not started to undress yet. Miss Doane never knows how to manage him.

[BURRILL *joins VEDAH and disappears with her in music room.*

CLAYTON.

[*Alone with ELINOR.*] Don't worry. Good night.

ELINOR.

Good night. [CLAYTON *offers to kiss her.*] No.

CLAYTON.

Still cross patch?

ELINOR.

We can't laugh it off, Frank.

CLAYTON.

Think we can *pout* it off?

ELINOR.

I think you can't tread my sensibilities into the mire by your affairs with other women and expect me to smile at cue.

CLAYTON.

Women!— One girl—and a man's natural curiosity about her type. Hang it—there must be some freedom.

ELINOR.

Do you suggest more than you've had?

CLAYTON.

I suggest domestic peace—or any other punishment than *this* deadly sulking.

ELINOR.

You've admitted you went to the woman's room.

CLAYTON.

Admitted nothing. I candidly told you I had gone there—*told* you in order that you might know all.

ELINOR.

Will that you were willing to tell.

CLAYTON.

I can't keep pace with your imagination.

ELINOR.

Your wish to have me "know all" is six months after the fact and when her photograph accidentally exposed you!

CLAYTON.

If you're kicking on the tardiness of your news service, I'm with you.

ELINOR.

I'm resenting your breach of faith.

CLAYTON.

Don't assume any covenant, my dear that doesn't exist.

ELINOR.

Do you deny your promises after the affair of two years ago?

CLAYTON.

I didn't promise to stagnate. I'm a publisher with a newsman's curiosity about the world he lives in.

ELINOR.

And what of a woman's curiosity?

CLAYTON.

Colossal! But not privileged. Curiosity of that kind in a woman is idle and immoral!

ELINOR.

And in a man?

CLAYTON.

A man's on the firing line—a woman's in the commissariat.

ELINOR.

Which is a fine way of saying you have a license for transgression that your wife has not.

CLAYTON.

If you will—yes.

ELINOR.

[*After a defiant pause.*] You're mistaken.

[*DE LOTA enters in wrap and carrying his hat.*]

DE LOTA.

Ready?

ELINOR.

Yes. [*To CLAYTON.*] You'll go up to Dick occasionally?

CLAYTON.

Certainly.

ELINOR.

[*Calls.*] Good night, Mr. Burrill—good night. [*To MRS. SEELIG and VEDAH.*] I feel awfully selfish.

[*MRS. SEELIG, VEDAH and BURRILL come from music room.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

Good night.

VEDAH.

Lovely time at dinner.

[ELINOR and DE LOTA start out.]

CLAYTON.

[*Getting the libretto from table.*] Here— isn't this your libretto?

ELINOR.

Thank you.

[*Takes it and goes out with DE LOTA.*] [*Sound of front door closing.*]

[*MRS. SEELIG, VEDAH and BURRILL are with CLAYTON.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

Now, if Papa doesn't come for us—you have us both on your hands.

DICK.

[*Coming down the stairs and calling.*] Mama—Mama.

CLAYTON.

Mama's gone, Dick. Don't let him call that way, Miss Doane.

[*DICK and MISS DOANE, the governess, appear in hallway.*]

DICK.

I want Mama.

MRS. SEELIG.

Here's Auntie Seelig, my dear—won't she do?

[*MISS DOANE and DICK enter.*]

CLAYTON.

It's much after his bed time.

MISS DOANE.

I don't think he's well, Mr. Clayton.

DICK.

My throat hurts.

CLAYTON.

Throat *hurts*?

MISS DOANE.

He complained at supper. I didn't tell Mrs. Clayton because she's so easily alarmed.

CLAYTON.

[*Taking DICK to the lamp.*] Let me see your throat, Dick. Open your mouth. [*To BURRILL.*] You know anything about throats?

BURRILL.

Not inside.

VEDAH.

Mama does.

MRS. SEELIG.

Papa Seelig's coming in a few minutes, Dick—he'll cure your throat. [*To CLAYTON as she takes the boy's face in her hands.*] Feverish.

CLAYTON.

[*To MISS DOANE.*] Let him wait then and see the Doctor.

MRS. SEELIG.

Doctor can see him better in the nursery. Come Dick—Auntie Seelig will tell you a pretty story while Miss Doane gets you to bed.

DICK.

[*To CLAYTON.*] Carry me.

CLAYTON.

[*Laughing.*] Carry you? You're taking advantage of all this sympathy. [*Picks him up.*] Excuse me—[*To BURRILL and VEDAH.*

MRS. SEELIG.

What is a father for—with his magazines and newspapers—if he can't carry a little boy upstairs, eh?

[*Goes with MISS DOANE after CLAYTON who carries DICK upstairs.*

VEDAH.

Looks sick, doesn't he?

BURRILL.

[*Nodding.*] Poor kid.

VEDAH.

He wants his mother. If Papa says he's ill I can go to Mrs. Clayton's box and let her know.

BURRILL.

Yes.

VEDAH.

Have you noticed the disposition of our two parties?

BURRILL.

Disposition?

VEDAH.

Mr. De Lota escorts Mrs. Clayton.

BURRILL.

Mr. Clayton doesn't care for the opera.

VEDAH.

Some of my friends have been good enough to comment on the frequency of Mr. De Lota's calls.

BURRILL.

[*Pause.*] Do you care?

VEDAH.

A woman's natural—pride.

BURRILL.

But—heartaches? [VEDAH *shakes head.*] Does Mrs. Clayton know of your engagement?

VEDAH.

No. [*Pause.*] Have you done what I asked you?

BURRILL.

What?

V E D A H.

A letter to Paris.

B U R R I L L.

There's none to whom I could write—on such a subject.

V E D A H.

Your model friend—she is still there?

B U R R I L L.

I suppose so.

V E D A H.

Why not a line to her?

B U R R I L L.

[*Evasively.*] She owes me nothing.

V E D A H.

Well—?

B U R R I L L.

She'd probably take alarm and forward the letter to the man himself.

V E D A H.

Why "forward"—has he left the country?

B U R R I L L.

[*Quickly recovering.*] Probably—or perhaps not—but—either way—nothing accomplished.

V E D A H.

Either way nothing lost. Won't you try?

BURRILL.

[*Disturbed.*] It isn't a manly thing to do—even against a rival.

VEDAH.

[*Smiling.*] Thank you.

BURRILL.

Why?

VEDAH.

Rival.

BURRILL.

Well?

VEDAH.

So far you've said only that you loved me.

BURRILL.

You don't resent—rival?

VEDAH.

Does any woman?

BURRILL.

[*With quick look about.*] You know, if there weren't so many doors here—[*Approaches her.*]

VEDAH.

[*Retreating.*] No—

[CLAYTON *re-appears on stairs.*]

BURRILL.

[*Changing the subject.*] And all originals. [*Indicates the framed sketches.*]

VEDAH.

So wonderful to 'have them, isn't it?

[*Enter CLAYTON.*]

CLAYTON.

Boy's certainly not himself.

VEDAH.

Poor child.

[*SUTTON enters.*]

SUTTON.

[*Announcing.*] Dr. Seelig.

[*Enter SEELIG. He is in evening dress and wears a cloak.*]

SEELIG.

Good evening Frank. [*Shakes hands with CLAYTON.*]
Mr. Burrill.

BURRILL.

Doctor.

SEELIG.

[*To VEDAH.*] Sorry to be late. Where's Mama?

CLAYTON.

With Dick—complains of his throat. Have you time to look at him?

V E D A H.

Certainly.

S E E L I G.

What is more important? Go up?

C L A Y T O N.

[*Nodding.*] The nursery. [SUTTON *takes* SEELIG'S
cloak and hat.

S E E L I G.

Get ready, my dear. [*Goes into hall and upstairs with*
CLAYTON.

V E D A H.

[*Resuming the interrupted talk with BURRILL.*] But
write to that girl.

B U R R I L L.

[*Smiling.*] I did say I loved you.

V E D A H.

A month ago.

B U R R I L L.

Yes.

V E D A H.

And now?

B U R R I L L.

There isn't any stronger word or I'd use it.

V E D A H.

[*Seriously.*] It isn't a thing a man says to a girl—be-
trothed to another man—is it?

BURRILL.

Not generally.

VEDAH.

That is another proof that you recognize Mr. De Lota as that man of the court room. You must—*do something*.

BURRILL.

[*Easily.*] Does it really matter?

VEDAH.

Matter? Why—we're engaged—aren't we—he and I?

BURRILL.

I've said *I* love you.

VEDAH.

Yes.

BURRILL.

And you've listened to it—because—you love me.

VEDAH.

[*Pause.*] Well?

BURRILL.

[*Shaking head.*] Not Mr. De Lota. I shall marry you—so what difference does it make what he did in Paris?

VEDAH.

I know my father. Mr. De Lota is of our faith, there would have to be good reason for breaking with him now.

[CLAYTON comes downstairs with MRS. SEELIG.]

BURRILL.

Breaking the engagement—would mean no distress to you?

VEDAH.

[*In half coquetry.*] Why have I listened to you?

[*Enter* MRS. SEELIG *and* CLAYTON.

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Getting her wrap.*] Not ready?

VEDAH.

Where's Papa?

MRS. SEELIG.

We are to send the car back to him. He wants to wait a while with Dick.

VEDAH.

Excuse me. [*Goes to hall.*

CLAYTON.

[*To* MRS. SEELIG.] Can I help you?

MRS. SEELIG.

It's very easy, this cloak.

[CLAYTON *assists* VEDAH *with her wrap.*

BURRILL.

Allow me. [*Holds cloak for* MRS. SEELIG.

MRS. SEELIG.

[To CLAYTON *as she goes.*] I won't say anything to Elinor until Doctor comes.

VEDAH.

Good night. [*Gives hand to BURRILL and goes out with* MRS. SEELIG.

[CLAYTON and BURRILL come down to the fire-place.

CLAYTON.

Wonderful man with children, this Seelig.

BURRILL.

I thought principally surgical cases?

CLAYTON.

He's at the head of the hospital for crippled children but great in diagnosis—medicine—anything.

BURRILL.

Heidelberg, Miss Vedah tells me.

CLAYTON.

[*Getting a cigar.*] Postgraduate yes—but New York family. *Father* left him ten millions.

BURRILL.

Might have struggled through with that.

CLAYTON.

His heart makes him a doctor. If ever I go to Heaven and that old Jew isn't there I'll ask for a rain check.

BURRILL.

[*Lights cigarette.*] I understand they receive Jews.

CLAYTON.

Heaven? [BURRILL *nods.*] Yes—very carelessly managed. Sit down. Judge Hoover will be here presently—he tells me you're acquainted. [*He sits as BURRILL takes a chair.*]

BURRILL.

[*Nodding.*] We meet at the Club.

CLAYTON.

Mrs. Clayton's father.

BURRILL.

I know.

CLAYTON.

I'd have had Judge to dinner but— [*Pause.*] How long you been in the Club?

BURRILL.

Two years only.

CLAYTON.

Perhaps you know?

BURRILL.

What?

CLAYTON.

The way Hoover's resisted the admission of Jews? He hates 'em.

BURRILL.

No.

CLAYTON.

Blackballed Seelig. What rot, eh?

BURRILL.

Foolish antipathy.

CLAYTON.

I *love* 'em—not the cheap ones. I hate cheap *Yankees* and cheap cattle of all kinds—but a classy Jew with education and culture—

BURRILL.

I agree with you.

CLAYTON.

While we think in vulgar integers—they think in compound fractions.

BURRILL.

True.

CLAYTON.

Damn it— [*Looks about in playful caution.*] I'm so wrong that I like their *noses*.

BURRILL.

[*Laughing.*] Not all of them.

CLAYTON.

Yes, all of them. Dismiss your prejudice for a while. See how insignificant our average Scandinavian and North Europe noses become. [BURRILL *nods*.] But—don't tell father-in-law Hoover you like 'em.

BURRILL.

[*Laughs*.] I won't. [*Seeing SEELIG who re-appears on the stairs*.] The Doctor.

[CLAYTON and BURRILL rise. SEELIG enters.]

SEELIG.

Don't disturb yourselves, gentlemen.

CLAYTON.

How do you find him?

SEELIG.

[*Pause*.] I'll look at him again when he's quiet. I hope some of the trouble may be only excitement.

CLAYTON.

Cigar?

SEELIG.

[*Shakes head*.] Thank you.

CLAYTON.

[*Standing by the fire*.] His mother tells me a singular thing. She was holding Dick's hand as he napped on her bed this afternoon—*babies* him a good deal. She was reading—to herself—an old book of Stockton's—some treasure-trove—men carrying sacks of gold from cave to

ship. Dick suddenly waked—sat up and said: “Where—where’s all that money?” Elinor said, “What money?” Dick said “that gold those—those men had!” Reading to *herself*!

SEELIG.

[*Easily.*] Yes. [*Pause.*] The connection between mother and child is more subtle, more enduring than our physiologies even suggest.

[SEELIG and BURRILL sit.]

CLAYTON.

Elinor invited the Underwoods to the opera—or I don’t think she would have gone herself.

SEELIG.

Courtlandt Underwoods?

CLAYTON.

Yes.

SEELIG.

Mrs. Underwood’s suddenly ill. That’s where I was delayed this evening.

CLAYTON.

Too ill to go out?

SEELIG.

Oh yes.

CLAYTON.

[*Thoughtfully.*] —M’m.

SEELIG.

[*To BURRILL.*] Doesn't the opera attract you?

BURRILL.

Yes, but—more important business here.

CLAYTON.

Those architects have sued us.

SEELIG.

Sued you?

CLAYTON.

[*Nodding.*] Libel. My editor insinuated graft in the sculpture awards and they jumped us.

SEELIG.

[*Laughing.*] Well. [*Looks to BURRILL.*] You insurgent artists are getting prompt action.

BURRILL.

Yes—I feel a little guilty at involving Mr. Clayton.

CLAYTON.

[*Reassuringly.*] We'll take care of that. [*To SEELIG.*] The Judge is coming to confer with us—Judge Hoover. [*SEELIG nods. HOOVER appears in hall.*] Ah—here he is.

HOOVER.

[*Removing his overcoat.*] Hello, Frank.

CLAYTON.

Waiting for you. [*Meets Hoover who comes into room.*
SEELIG rises.] Dr. Seelig, you know.

HOOVER.

Good evening.

SEELIG.

Judge.

HOOVER.

How are you, Burrill?

BURRILL.

Good evening—[*Shake hands.*[*Enter SUTTON.*

SUTTON.

Automobile for Dr. Seelig.

SEELIG.

Tell him to wait, please.

[*SUTTON goes.*

CLAYTON.

[*Answering Hoover's look.*] Doctor's been good
enough to stay and see Dick.

HOOVER.

[*Anxiously.*] Boy sick?

SEELIG.

These sudden fevers; can't tell immediately.

H O O V E R.

[*To BURRILL.*] Poor little Dick—when he's ill it gets me right in the stomach. Man's an idiot to have grandchildren.

S E E L I G.

Still a pardonable weakness.

H O O V E R.

[*To BURRILL.*] I did a stupid thing. Left the copies of those letters you sent me—the photographs—all at my office.

B U R R I L L.

Originals are at my studio—only two blocks. [*Starts out.*]

C L A Y T O N.

[*To HOOVER.*] Do we need them?

H O O V E R.

Better have them.

B U R R I L L.

Won't be five minutes.

[*Goes out.*]

H O O V E R.

Doctor, may Dick see his grandfather?

[*MISS DOANE appears down the stairs.*]

S E E L I G.

I'm waiting for him to get quiet, but—

[*MISS DOANE enters.*]

H O O V E R.

No, you're the boss.

M I S S D O A N E.

Doctor.

S E E L I G.

Ready?

[MISS DOANE *nods*. SEELIG *goes with her and upstairs*.]

H O O V E R.

[*Alone with* CLAYTON.] Nearly scared me out of a year's growth.

C L A Y T O N.

Dick?

H O O V E R.

Seelig. I feared you'd asked him to sit in this conference.

C L A Y T O N.

[*Shaking head*.] I know your prejudice too well for that.

H O O V E R.

Not him expressly—but the whole breed—and it isn't prejudice. Observation and experience.

C L A Y T O N.

I'll chance 'em.

H O O V E R.

Chance is the word. This libel suit's a proof of it.
[*Gets a cigarette*.]

CLAYTON.

An Irishman wrote the editorial.

HOOVER.

[*Nods.*] On information furnished by a Jew. Wasn't it?

CLAYTON.

De Lota! Yes—but De Lota's pretty cautious.

HOOVER.

[*Shaking head in disapproval.*] Bad lot—I know him. He'll get in some nasty scandal before he finishes and it'll react on your business.

CLAYTON.

Why do you say that?

HOOVER.

A rounder—stamping ground the Great White Way.

CLAYTON.

His contract's the Great White Way—he does art and music for us.

HOOVER.

I passed his side street hotel on my way here. De Lota sneaking in with a girl.

CLAYTON.

[*Easily.*] Guess you're mistaken. ♡

HOOVER.

I called him.

CLAYTON.

His hotel? [Hoover *nods.*] De Lota stops at the Ducal Apartments.

HOOVER.

[*Nods.*] Ducal Apartments?

CLAYTON.

That's a bachelor place—women not admitted.

HOOVER.

Not *admitted* nor *permitted after eleven o'clock.*

CLAYTON.

I'd hate to know as much about this town as you do

HOOVER.

Wait 'till you're my age.

CLAYTON.

[*After a disarming pause.*] What kind of a girl?

HOOVER.

Didn't get her number—she scooted ahead.

CLAYTON.

You spoke to him?

HOOVER.

Called to him.

CLAYTON.

Called?

HOOVER.

Yes— I was forty feet away.

CLAYTON.

Had your nerve with you.

HOOVER.

The girl dropped something—I thought it was a fan.

CLAYTON.

Well?

HOOVER.

'Twasn't—but that's why I called De Lota.

CLAYTON.

How do you know it wasn't?

HOOVER.

I picked it up.

CLAYTON.

What was it?

HOOVER.

A libretto.

CLAYTON.

What libretto?

HOOVER.

Don't know—but grand opera—I remember that and libretto.

CLAYTON.

You threw it away?

HOOVER.

No—kept it.

CLAYTON.

Where is it?

HOOVER.

Overcoat pocket.

CLAYTON.

[*Pause.*] I'd like to see it. Think I could have some fun with De Lota.

HOOVER.

[*Going up to hallway.*] My idea too—fun and word of caution. [*Gets coat and returns feeling in pocket for libretto.*]

CLAYTON.

Caution—naturally.

HOOVER.

Here it is. [*Reads.*] Aida.

CLAYTON.

[*Taking libretto savagely.*] Aida—let me see it.

HOOVER.

What's the matter? [*Puts coat on a chair.*]

CLAYTON.

[*In sudden anger, throws book.*] The dog! Damn him—damn both of them!

H O O V E R.

What is it? See here—Who's with Dick?

CLAYTON.

Not his mother—no! [*Points to libretto on the floor.*] Marked. I did that myself, not an hour ago, and gave it to her.

H O O V E R.

To Elinor?

CLAYTON.

[*Calling as he rushes to the hall.*] Sutton! Sutton!

H O O V E R.

Hold on, Frank—there's some mistake.

CLAYTON.

[*Gets overcoat and hat.*] Get me a cab—never mind—I'll take Seelig's machine. [*Disappears.*] Here! Doctor Seelig says to take me to—[*He goes out. Door bangs.*

[*SUTTON enters from dining room.*

S U T T O N.

Is master Dick in danger, sir?

H O O V E R.

[*Nervously.*] I don't know, Sutton. Where's his mother?

SUTTON.

Opera, sir.

HOOVER.

With whom?

SUTTON.

Mr. De Lota.

[Enter SEELIG from upstairs.]

HOOVER.

That'll do.

[SUTTON goes.]

HOOVER.

Doctor Seelig.

SEELIG.

Judge Hoover.

HOOVER.

Mr. Clayton was summoned hurriedly—he took your automobile.

SEELIG.

I'm glad it could be of service.

HOOVER.

I'll get *you* a cab. *[Goes to telephone.]*

SEELIG.

I'm not going, thank you—simply sending a prescription.
[Starts toward push button.]

HOOVER.

Perhaps you'd—better go—Doctor Seelig.

SEELIG.

[*Stopping.*] Why so, Judge? I've a very sick little patient upstairs.

HOOVER.

Your pardon! But— [*Pause.*] Mr. Clayton's just had some disturbing news—. The—I think the family would rather be left to themselves this evening.

SEELIG.

I shan't intrude past professional requirement—believe me. [*Rings.*]

HOOVER.

I *do* believe you! Doctor. [*Nervously getting his coat from the chair.*] You and I are not especially intimate—but in your own sphere of usefulness I respect you.

SEELIG.

Thank you.

HOOVER.

A physician is not unlike a lawyer in his relations to his client. [*SEELIG nods.*] I ask you to treat sacredly and with discretion—any matter that comes to your knowledge *here*—*tonight*.

SEELIG.

My obligation to do that, Judge Hoover—has a firmer anchorage than even your request.

HOOVER.

I know it—excuse me. Clayton's news—bears on me, too, a little.

[*Enter SUTTON in response to SEELIG's ring.*]

H O O V E R.

Sutton—Mr. Burrill will return. Say that important business has called me away.

S U T T O N.

Yes, sir.

H O O V E R.

And we'll make another appointment.

[Quickly goes out.]

S E E L I G.

Sutton—

S U T T O N.

Yes, sir *[Returns.]*

S E E L I G.

Is there someone who can take this prescription to the druggist and wait for it?

S U T T O N.

Yes, sir.

S E E L I G.

And go quickly?

S U T T O N.

Yes, sir.

S E E L I G.

Frazer's.

[SUTTON nods and leaves.]

SEELIG.

[*At 'phone.*] Bryant 6151. [*Pause—regards watch.*] Hello—Frazer's? [*Pause.*] Doctor Seelig. I'm sending a prescription by messenger—from Mr. Frank Clayton's. Will you please fill it as promptly as possible? [*Pause.*] Thank you. [*Hangs up 'phone.*]

[BURRILL and SUTTON appear in hall. BURRILL carries a package of papers.]

SUTTON.

Mr. Clayton and Judge Hoover have been called away. Judge Hoover said he'd make another appointment.

[SUTTON and BURRILL enter.]

BURRILL.

Oh—[*Pause.*] Well—I'll leave this envelope for them—they may care to see it when they come in. [*Seeing SEELIG.*] How's the boy, Doctor?

SEELIG.

Quite ill—poor baby.

BURRILL.

Too bad— [*To SUTTON.*] I'll speak with the Doctor a moment. [*SUTTON bows—and goes out.*]

BURRILL.

You have a minute or two?

SEELIG.

[*Still seated at 'phone table.*] I've sent for some medicine—and am free until it comes.

BURRILL.

[*Approaching.*] I want to thank you, Doctor, for your interest in my work.

SEELIG.

It's been a pleasure, Mr. Burrill.

BURRILL.

It's been a lesson to me.

SEELIG.

Lesson?

BURRILL.

[*Nodding.*] I'm reprehensively ignorant on most subjects, especially religion and—well—your interest in sculpture—your toleration of it surprised me.

SEELIG.

Why?

BURRILL.

I'd always thought there was something in your tenets that forbade any graven image.

SEELIG.

Only as objects of idolatry I think. The words are: "Nor bow down and worship them." As works of art I don't know any prohibition. My dear old father was a very orthodox believer—closed his office on Saturday and all that—but he was a liberal patron of the arts. In fact, I don't know a Jew among a fairly extensive circle—that feels as you—as you feared, Mr. Burrill.

BURRILL,

You are not so orthodox as your father then?

SEELIG,

Not orthodox at all.

BURRILL,

I got a contrary impression.

SEELIG,

From Judge Hoover?

BURRILL,

From Miss Vedah.

SEELIG,

Vedah?

BURRILL,

Yes. It is of her I wish to speak.

SEELIG,

Ah!

BURRILL,

I wouldn't speak of her—if—if I didn't think a mistake was being made, Dr. Seelig.

SEELIG,

A mistake!

BURRILL,

Yes—I mean that my own feelings are not my sole guide. I think that Miss Vedah—likes me.

SEELIG.

I'm glad you see it. I have cautioned her myself—and now perhaps you will aid me.

BURRILL.

I speak to you about it as a matter of honor. You—you've been so ready to invite me to your house and all that—and—

SEELIG.

And to tell you early of Vedah's engagement?

BURRILL.

Yes—so my duty is to be a trifle old fashioned, if you will and to tell you that—I mean to increase her—regard for me—all I can.

SEELIG.

Her regard? Only that?

BURRILL.

I've no right to speak for her—so—

SEELIG.

Has Vedah said more?

BURRILL.

I've said more. She knows that I *love* her.

SEELIG.

You told her so?

BURRILL.

Yes.

SEELIG.

Then this caution to me is somewhat late, isn't it?

BURRILL.

But unavoidably. If I didn't think she cared more for me than for—the man to whom she's engaged, I don't think I'd have spoken.

SEELIG.

You mean to me?

BURRILL.

To either of you.

SEELIG.

Why not *first* to me?

BURRILL.

Until I was sure there was no need to distress you, as I felt you would be, as I feel you are. [*Walks away as having said all that is possible.*]

SEELIG.

[*Pause, slowly rises and approaches BURRILL.*] In asking your patient understanding, Mr. Burrill—I am fortunate that you are a sculptor.

BURRILL.

How so, Doctor?

SEELIG.

Most sculptors think in large symbols. The little span of human life takes its true proportion.

B U R R I L L.

This life is all *I'm* sure of. I fear its rather important to me.

S E E L I G.

It's all any of us is sure of. [*Pause.*] I'm not a religionist, Mr. Burrill—but—[*Pause.*] It has been wisely written, "Of all factors that make races and individuals what they are the most potent is religion." It would be a very sorry world without it.

B U R R I L L.

There can be more than one religion, however, can't there?

S E E L I G.

There should be. Even to grind corn there must be two millstones. And for the world to grow in religion there must be more than one idea. [*Pause.*] The belief in one God is the trust given to the Jew—the precious idea of which every Jewish woman is custodian and which to transmit—the Jew suffers and persists. You see, Mr. Burrill, that there is something here to think of.

B U R R I L L.

Yes.

S E E L I G.

The Christain faith itself needs our testimony. It is built upon our foundation—and whenever a daughter quits
us the religious welfare of the whole world is the loser.

True!

B U R R I L L.

I don't see that.

SEELIG.

Pardon the pride, which our proverb says "Goes often before a fall" and let me call your recollection to the nobility of this trust which a Jewish girl abandons if she marries elsewhere] [BURRILL *nods.*] [*A pause.*] When Egypt worshipped Isis and Osiris and Thoth, Israel proclaimed the one God. When India knelt to Vishnu and Siva and Kali, Israel prayed only to Jehovah and down past Greece and Rome, with their numerous divinities from Jove to Saturn, Judah looked up to one God. What a legacy—what a birthright! How small our personal desires grow in comparison. As a sculptor, who writes in bronze that all time may read, what message can you leave if one so grand as this fails of your respect?

BURRILL.

It has my respect sir.

SEELIG.

I was sure of it. Is it too much to ask that a girl shall have time to think of this?

BURRILL.

No, sir! I shall say nothing to her more than I have said, which is I love her and I know she loves me.

[SEELIG *bows slowly*, BURRILL *respectfully acknowledges the bow.*

[ELINOR *enters excitedly*, sees BURRILL and SEELIG and quickly passes to the music room. HOOVER comes in.

HOOVER.

[*Nervously.*] Mr. Burrill—you will have to excuse Mr. and Mrs. Clayton tonight?

B U R R I L L.

I know—good night. [*Goes quickly out.*]

[HOOVER turns helplessly toward SEELIG, who with a gesture of comprehension, goes upstairs. As SEELIG goes, ELINOR enters by the other arch.]

E L I N O R.

Don't leave me, father. [*She walks excitedly.*]

H O O V E R.

I won't. But I'm not only your father—I'm an attorney—a counsellor. Let me have the truth, Elinor. The door was locked?

E L I N O R.

[*Sitting.*] De Lota locked it in sheer playfulness. I was begging him to open it when Frank came.

H O O V E R.

But why there at all? Why in De Lota's rooms?

E L I N O R.

Just plain madness. Twice at dinner the conversation got onto Mr. Burrill's sculpture. Frank has had an affair with Burrill's model. [*Rises and walks; throws her cloak onto the table.*]

H O O V E R.

When? Not since the trouble of Atlantic City?

E L I N O R.

This year in Paris—I've made him almost admit it. De Lota introduced them. Tonight when we found the Under-

woods couldn't go—and we were alone for the evening, De Lota and I—he proposed seeing some Japanese carvings he has in his rooms.

H O O V E R.

But, Elinor—you're not an infant. A proposal of that kind is only a mask for lawlessness.

E L I N O R.

I *am* lawless. *He* claims the right to follow *his* fancy, and does follow it—my right is equal. He introduced me to this very woman on the Boulevard—but I didn't strike her, did I?

H O O V E R.

Did Frank strike De Lota?

E L I N O R.

Like a cheap bully. [*The front door is slammed violently.*
[CLAYTON *enters, pale with excitement.*

C L A Y T O N.

You came *here*, did you?

E L I N O R.

Why shouldn't I? You haven't made it such a sanctified temple that I'm unworthy to enter it.

C L A Y T O N.

[*To* HOOVER.] She can't stay.

H O O V E R.

[*Going to* CLAYTON.] See here, Frank. You're in no state of mind to make any important decision.

CLAYTON.

The facts make the decision—

HOOVER.

You haven't got the facts?

CLAYTON.

I've got all I can stand and we won't vulgarly discuss them. I decline to live with an adulteress.

ELINOR.

I'm not that—but I am an indignant and cruelly neglected woman.

CLAYTON.

She's your daughter. Now take her from my house or—I'll have the servants do it!

[Strides into the music room.]

ELINOR.

[Impetuously.] Coward! His house—

HOOVER.

Elinor—that's not the way.

ELINOR.

I haven't worked in his office—but every step in his success we consulted and agreed upon. *His house!* You know that every investment—

HOOVER.

He doesn't mean it. He's excited beyond control—any husband would be.

ELINOR.

In every tight place it was *your* legal advice that—

HOOVER.

We can't go into that now, my dear. Humor him—avoid
the scene before the servants. I'll take you to a hotel and—

ELINOR.

Hotel! The cruelty of it—turned like a common woman
onto the street. [*Sinks overwhelmed into a chair.*]

HOOVER.

Only a day or two. If things were only as you say at
De Lota's we can get Frank to believe us—

ELINOR.

After what I've forgiven him! Oh, dad—

HOOVER.

Don't—don't! Change your gown and we'll go. To-
morrow will put another color on everything. [*Helps her
up and leads her protesting toward the hall.*]

ELINOR.

[*Resentfully.*] The injustice of it—! The cruelty—!
The—

[*SEELIG comes downstairs and meets HOOVER and
ELINOR in the doorway.*]

SEELIG.

Pardon—

HOOVER.

[*Trying to pass.*] Mrs. Clayton isn't well.

[SEELIG enters.]

SEELIG.

[*Taking ELINOR's hand.*] I see—but come from the hall. Dick will hear you.

ELINOR.

Dick?

SEELIG.

Yes.

ELINOR.

Dick's ill—? I'll go to him.

SEELIG.

[*Restraining ELINOR.*] One moment—[*To HOOVER.*] You go to him.

HOOVER.

The situation here, Doctor—

SEELIG.

I think Judge Hoover, I comprehend the situation here, please go.

[*HOOVER goes upstairs.*]

ELINOR.

[*As SEELIG brings her further into the room.*] I can't leave without seeing my boy.

SEELIG.

Leave! [*Slowly.*] No—no—but you must be calm when you go to him. There must be no excitement whatever.

ELINOR.

[*Hysterically.*] I can't be calm and go away from him—if he's ill. You know the boy, Doctor. How much we are to each other—all his life—I've never neglected him.

SEELIG.

I know.

ELINOR.

It's too much to bear—[*Falls weeping into the chair at fireplace.*]

[CLAYTON enters.]

CLAYTON.

[*With suppression.*] If there's any man, Doctor, your people should have run straight with—I'm the man.

SEELIG.

My people?

CLAYTON.

[*Pointing to ELINOR.*] Locked in Ben De Lota's rooms.

SEELIG.

My people! [*Pause.*] A Jew!

CLAYTON.

[*Vehemently.*] A Jew.

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] There was another Jew—if one of *His* people may quote Him—[*Puts hand on ELINOR's head.*] “Are you to cast the first stone?”

CLAYTON.

I'm no hypocrite—I never subscribed to his code—and I'll not begin the living hell—of life with a dishonored woman.

ELINOR.

[*Rising defiantly.*] I'm not dishonored. I only *claim* the right you *exercise* for yourself to go where life interests me. If it's honorable and moral for *you*—it's equally honorable and equally moral for me.

CLAYTON.

Every right you may possibly claim you have fully earned by your visit to Ben De Lota's room. I'm going to make your equality complete. From now on, you'll protect yourself and you'll earn the substance your vanity squanders.

ELINOR.

Ah!—

SEELIG.

[*Interrupting ELINOR's outburst.*] One moment—don't speak, my child. [*Pause. Calms ELINOR to her chair.*] Your difference must wait. Just now Mrs. Clayton must be composed.

CLAYTON.

[*Explosively.*] We're past the consideration of her nerves. Just now Mrs. Clayton must take what she needs for the night and leave—her trunks will follow her. [*Goes to the push button and rings.*]

SEELIG.

[*In masterful calm.*] No Frank—she shall not leave.

CLAYTON.

She'll not—

SEELIG.

She shall not.

CLAYTON.

[*Angrily.*] What have *you* got to do with it?

SEELIG.

Every thing! There's a little *boy* upstairs—no one shall move him until I give permission, and his life for the next few days will depend on the mother that gave it him.

[*Enter* SUTTON.

CLAYTON.

[*Pause.*] SUTTON— [*Pause—SEELIG looks sharply and steadily at CLAYTON.*] pack my valise—and send it to the Club.

SUTTON.

Yes, sir.

[*Goes out.*

CLAYTON.

[*Leaving the room.*] Good night, Doctor Seelig.

SEELIG.

[*Quietly.*] Good night.

[*ELINOR still seated turns weeping to SEELIG who embraces her paternally.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III.



ACT THREE



SCENE: Library in house of DOCTOR SEELIG. Door at back lets into Drawing Room which formed the first act. Another door to left lets into the hallway. Large diamond paned and leaded window with seat at right. Mantel and fireplace are at back. Over mantel is picture of Judith. Other pictures are heavily framed on wall. Book-cases height of mantel are at all walls. The ceiling is carved and heavily beamed. Near window is library table with lamp. In front of table and masking it is heavy sofa. Big easy chairs flank and half face the fire. A second table has a telephone. On mantel are DE LOTA's two vases. Other ornaments complete shelf furniture. General tone of scene and carpet is red and gold.

At Rise of Curtain BURRILL is discovered waiting.

[HOLLAND enters.]

HOLLAND.

Miss Seelig will be down immediately.

BURRILL.

Thank you.

[Exit HOLLAND.]

[BURRILL scans the book shelves.]

[VEDAH enters.]

V E D A H.

Julian! [*Extends both hands.*]

B U R R I L L.

My sweetheart! [*Kisses her.*]

V E D A H.

Together after all the talk and tears and family councils.

B U R R I L L.

Have there been tears?

V E D A H.

[*Nodding.*] Some.

B U R R I L L.

You poor dear.

V E D A H.

I've tried so hard not to care for you.

B U R R I L L.

Have you? [*They sit together on the sofa.*]

V E D A H.

Yes. Read the persecutions of my ancestry and blamed it all on yours and then said, with Mercutio, "A plague on both your houses."

B U R R I L L.

I hope you are as incurably smitten as Mercutio was when he said that.

V E D A H.

I think I must be. Wasn't there something about a church door?

B U R R I L L.

You angel!

V E D A H.

Our critics write that the vice of our race is display.

B U R R I L L.

Well?

V E D A H.

And I fear it's true. I have a great *envie* to have the noted American sculptor in our box and all the opera glasses saying, "Vedah Seelig! She's caught him at last."

B U R R I L L.

Have you manœuvred greatly?

V E D A H.

Shamelessly—not even introduced to you.

B U R R I L L.

I know it—but we've met, haven't we? [*Kisses her.*]

V E D A H.

[*Resisting tardily.*] That isn't being done, you know, until the engagement is announced.

B U R R I L L.

How does one tell?

V E D A H.

I suppose—one doesn't *tell*?

B U R R I L L.

What have you been doing since I saw you?

V E D A H.

Home mostly. You know Mrs. Clayton is visiting us?

B U R R I L L.

Mrs. Clayton?

V E D A H.

And little Dick. He has the room that was my nursery. I've spent a lot of time with Dick.

B U R R I L L.

And what operas—what parties?

V E D A H.

Twice to the opera.

B U R R I L L.

With—?

V E D A H.

Mama. Then once to the theatre.

B U R R I L L.

With—?

V E D A H.

Mama and papa.

BURRILL.

No suitors? [VEDAH *shakes her head.*] Not even one?

VEDAH.

You mean have I seen Mr. De Lota?

BURRILL.

Well?

VEDAH.

He is out of the city.

BURRILL.

Oh.

[MRS. SEELIG *enters.*

MRS. SEELIG.

Vedah!

[BURRILL *and* VEDAH *rise.*

VEDAH.

Mama.

MRS. SEELIG.

Mr. Burrill. [*Gives hand.*

BURRILL.

Mrs. Seelig.

MRS. SEELIG.

You didn't tell me Mr. Burrill had called.

VEDAH.

Did you wish to know?

MRS. SEELIG.

Of course. [*She goes to the telephone.*] Give me 2500 Plaza, please. [*Pause.*] I want to speak to Doctor Seelig if he's there. [*Pause.*] Mrs. Seelig.

VEDAH.

Why do you want him, Mama?

MRS. SEELIG.

You'll see in good time.

VEDAH.

[*To BURRILL.*] A girl never grows up in her mother's mind.

MRS. SEELIG.

Yes. That you, Samuel? [*Pause.*] Will you be home soon? [*Pause.*] Well, nothing important—except— [*Pause.*] Mr. Burrill is here—and—I thought I'd ask him to wait for you— [*Pause.*] No— [*Pause.*] No—well—I think it much better for you to do it yourself— [*BURRILL and VEDAH quickly exchange glances and BURRILL comically interests himself in the books.*] Perhaps—but are you coming? [*Pause.*] Thank you. [*Hangs up 'phone.*]

VEDAH.

What is it?

MRS. SEELIG.

You know— [*To BURRILL.*] Sit down, Mr. Burrill— [*MRS. SEELIG and VEDAH sit together.*] Vedah's father and I have had a good many talks about—about you and Vedah.

BURRILL.

Yes?

MRS. SEELIG.

We haven't always agreed.

BURRILL.

I'm sorry to be the cause of any difference.

MRS. SEELIG.

It's Doctor's fault. I've always said to him, don't invite any men to your house in whom you wouldn't be willing to see your daughter interested.

VEDAH.

But Mama, Papa didn't invite Mr. Burrill.

MRS. SEELIG.

I know, but Papa was *with* you. That was the time for him to have been firm. And not go locking the stable after—

VEDAH.

Oh, Mama, don't make me into a stolen horse.

BURRILL.

No—see what I'd be.

MRS. SEELIG.

[*To* VEDAH.] You'd better listen.

BURRILL.

Pardon.

MRS. SEELIG.

Vedah's our only child, Mr. Burrill, and my first wish is to see her happy—but—

VEDAH.

Mama means that any unhappiness of mine wouldn't matter if she had another daughter.

MRS. SEELIG.

Mr. Burrill understands me, I'm sure.

BURRILL.

I do, Mrs. Seelig.

MRS. SEELIG.

But Doctor and I agree that Vedah should *think* calmly.

VEDAH.

That's expecting a good deal.

MRS. SEELIG.

The Doctor is—going to—well, not let you see so much of each other, and I want to prepare you, Mr. Burrill, for his talk with you.

[*Enter* HOLLAND.

HOLLAND.

Mr. De Lota and Judge Hoover.

MRS. SEELIG.

Judge Hoover! Excuse me. [*Follows* HOLLAND out.

BURRILL.

Mr. De Lota?

VEDAH.

Yes. And now with Papa going to talk—you haven't informed yourself about that Paris affair.

BURRILL.

I wouldn't talk that no matter what I knew.

VEDAH.

It's on my mind all the time.

[*Enter* MRS. SEELIG.

MRS. SEELIG.

You go to the living room— [VEDAH and BURRILL start out.] I'll join you. [VEDAH and BURRILL go to drawing room.] Come in, gentlemen.

[*Enter* HOOVER and DE LOTA from the hall.

HOOVER.

Some years since we met, Mrs. Seelig.

MRS. SEELIG.

Yes— [*To* DE LOTA.] *You've* been away, Benjamin?

DE LOTA.

[*Nods.*] How is Mrs. Clayton's son?

MRS. SEELIG.

Doctor says he may go out in a day or two.

DE LOTA.

[*To HOOVER in tone of congratulation.*] Ah!

HOOVER.

It's been very good of you, Mrs. Seelig, to have him and his mother here.

MRS. SEELIG.

A change of surroundings—and Dick's always called me Auntie. [*ELINOR enters by the door from hall.*]

ELINOR.

Father!

HOOVER.

My dear. [*Kisses her.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

We shall see *you* later, Mr. De Lota?

DE LOTA.

Oh—yes—yes.

[*MRS. SEELIG goes into the drawing room closing the door after her.*]

ELINOR.

You two come—here *together*.

HOOVER.

I *brought* Mr. De Lota—yes.

ELINOR.

Why?

H O O V E R.

Sit down, my dear. It's going to take more than a minute. [ELINOR *sits.*] And you— [DE LOTA *sits.*] When have you heard from Frank?

E L I N O R.

[*Anxiously rising.*] Don't they know where he is?

H O O V E R.

Good Heavens, Elinor—don't answer my question by asking another.

E L I N O R.

But don't they?

H O O V E R.

Don't *who* know where he is?

E L I N O R.

Anybody.

H O O V E R.

Hundreds I suppose—but have *you* heard from him?

E L I N O R.

No.

H O O V E R.

Doesn't he ask after little Dick?

E L I N O R.

He 'phones Doctor Seelig every day.

H O O V E R.

But you?

E L I N O R.

No. [*Pause.*

H O O V E R.

Frank has instructed Colonel Emory to begin suit.

E L I N O R.

You mean?

H O O V E R.

Divorce.

E L I N O R.

Oh!

H O O V E R.

You expected it, didn't you?

E L I N O R.

Not after his conduct with this second woman—this sculptor model in Paris.

H O O V E R.

That wasn't condoned, eh?

E L I N O R.

Not after I discovered it.

H O O V E R.

What—what proof have you of *that* affair?

E L I N O R.

He *admitted* it.

H O O V E R.

[*Quickly.*] He did?

ELINOR.

Almost.

HOOVER.

I fear "almost" won't go in court.

ELINOR.

And—Mr. De Lota *knows* it. He told me so.

DE LOTA.

[*As Hoover turns to him.*] My opinion.

HOOVER.

You *told* Mrs. Clayton that, did you.

DE LOTA.

My opinion—yes.

HOOVER.

Have you and she met since—Clayton and I—came to your hotel?

DE LOTA.

No.

HOOVER.

Communicated? [DE LOTA *shakes head.*] Oh—then you told her—this opinion of yours with an idea of its influence upon *her*?

DE LOTA.

I answered her questions.

HOOVER.

And a damn fine mess you've made of it.

DE LOTA.

Perhaps Judge Hoover, we'd better get to the purpose of our call.

HOOVER.

Perhaps. [*To ELINOR.*] I don't need to tell you, Elinor, that this thing's awkward for *me*.

ELINOR.

I know.

HOOVER.

The other side can subpoena me—and my testimony can't help you—[*Pause.*] If we go about it rightly, however, Colonel Emory thinks Frank can be persuaded to let you get the decree.

ELINOR.

No.

HOOVER.

No?

ELINOR.

The reason for not getting a divorce two years ago is much greater now.

HOOVER.

You mean—?

ELINOR.

I mean Dick.

HOOVER.

It's better for Dick to have the blame fixed on his father than upon you.

ELINOR.

I'm not guilty.

H O O V E R.

My dear Elinor, I'm your father—and— and I believe you—but [*Pause.*] I'm an attorney and I have been a Judge. The case is against you.

E L I N O R.

[*To DE LOTA.*] You know I'm not a guilty woman.

D E L O T A.

I do—but your father is right. We must face the situation as it is. I love you, Elinor. [*Comes to her.*]

E L I N O R.

[*Recoiling.*] Don't say that to me.

H O O V E R.

My dear, I've brought Mr. De Lota here that, unpleasant as it is, he *might* say it—in my hearing.

E L I N O R.

You?

H O O V E R.

Yes. If we can't arrange it as Colonel Emory proposes— [*Pause.*] Mr. De Lota's willing to marry you.

E L I N O R.

Oh! [*Covers her face in revulsion.*]

H O O V E R.

[*Soothing her.*] Don't—don't do that. It isn't what any of us hoped for some years ago—but it's a devilish sight better, my dear, than it all looked last month.

ELINOR.

There can't be such injustice in the world—that he may go unscathed and little Dick and I—no—no—I can't live and have it come to that. I won't consent to any such arrangement of it all.

HOOVER.

It's little Dick I'm asking you to think of.

ELINOR.

He's all I am thinking of. He's like his father—it's his father's name he'll carry through his life and I'm not going even to *propose* to blacken it.

HOOVER.

What are you going to do?

ELINOR.

Defend myself—defend my boy's mother.

HOOVER.

Against the boy's father?

ELINOR.

Yes.

HOOVER.

And if the court gives Clayton a decree of divorce?

ELINOR.

Then I shall *live*—live so that he'll see some day he was mistaken.

H O O V E R.

There's one point we musn't overlook. Dick's hew old?

E L I N O R.

He's seven.

H O O V E R.

The court may award his custody to Clayton.

E L I N O R.

[*Greatly agitated.*] Oh no! Father! They won't—they can't do that.

H O O V E R.

I don't know.

E L I N O R.

You can think—arrange some way to avoid that.

H O O V E R.

I have thought of one way—you won't listen. If we can persuade Clayton to be the defendant, that settles it. If we fight him as you propose, his anger may lead him to take the boy.

E L I N O R.

Divorce!

D E L O T A.

And no certainty it can be kept quiet.

E L I N O R.

You mean the papers?

D E L O T A.

Yes. If Mr. Clayton lets you get the decree—only the Chardenet girl will be named.

[ELINOR rings push button by fireplace.

H O O V E R.

What are you doing?

E L I N O R.

Tell Mrs. Seelig—

D E L O T A.

No—no—

H O O V E R.

Why?

E L I N O R.

Because Doctor Seelig has told her nothing.

[Enter HOLLAND.

H O O V E R.

One minute.

H O L L A N D.

[Going.] Yes, sir.

E L I N O R.

Holland—ask Mrs. Seelig to come here.

[HOLLAND goes.

H O O V E R.

Wait 'till Frank decides.

ELINOR.

I've decided.

HOOVER.

But you may reconsider.

DE LOTA.

Yes—why tell her now?

ELINOR.

She has a right to know.

HOOVER.

What right?

ELINOR.

A wife's right—a mother's right. The right of a woman who has taken an outcast into her home.

HOOVER.

You were not an outcast, Elinor—you could have come to me.

ELINOR.

In your club?

HOOVER.

I'd have gone to a hotel.

DE LOTA.

I beg of you, Elinor—wait—or at least don't tell *everything*. My position in this house is—peculiar.

HOOVER.

Your position?

D E L O T A.

Yes—a tacit engagement—to Vedah.

E L I N O R.

Oh! How vile it all makes me.

D E L O T A.

The more reason to be careful.

[*Enter* MRS. SEELIG.

M R S. S E E L I G.

My dear?

H O O V E R.

[*Cautioning.*] Elinor!

M R S. S E E L I G.

What is it? [*Starts to* ELINOR.

E L I N O R.

Wait—[*Pause.*—until I tell you—[*Pause.*—doctor told you only that it would be good for Dick to come here? Nothing more?

M R S. S E E L I G.

Nothing.

E L I N O R.

Not—my trouble—with Frank?

MRS. SEELIG.

No—and don't you tell it, my dear, if it agitates you. Besides, Frank has lots to worry him. We mustn't judge too quickly.

ELINOR.

He wants a divorce.

MRS. SEELIG.

He does?

ELINOR.

[*Nodding.*] He's already gone to a lawyer about it—father has just told me.

MRS. SEELIG.

Because [*Looks at HOOPER who nods toward DE LOTA.*] Frank's jealous—of Benjamin? [*To ELINOR.*]

ELINOR.

I had no idea Vedah was engaged to him. Oh, it's too—too horrible.

MRS. SEELIG.

What ideas men *can* get in their heads.

ELINOR.

No, I'm to blame, Mrs. Seelig. I deserve it all—I did go to his rooms—the Doctor knows.

MRS. SEELIG.

Your rooms—[*DE LOTA nods.*] Together?

DE LOTA.

Yes.

MRS. SEELIG.

But, my dear Elinor—

ELINOR.

The Doctor believes me—I was crazy—rebellious—vengeful—striking back—bitterly resentful of deceit Frank had been newly guilty of. I went as much in the name of all women despitefully treated as I did in assertion of my own freedom. And then—I came to my senses. I'm not guilty or I wouldn't be in your home—

MRS. SEELIG.

My dear! [*Takes ELINOR in her arms.*][*Enter SEELIG.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Quietly.*] She's just told me.

SEELIG.

[*To HOOVER.*] Col. Emery called on me this afternoon.

HOOVER.

Then you know?

SEELIG.

Yes.

HOOVER.

Naturally somewhat of a shock. [*Indicates ELINOR.*]

SEELIG.

Yes.

HOOVER.

We haven't any right to expect less from Clayton.

ELINOR.

No right? Did I divorce him two years ago when he was *guilty*—really guilty. Did I?

HOOVER.

No! You made a scene with the woman and got a rotten lot of newspaper notoriety—but the offense you condoned.

MRS. SEELIG.

And a man that's been forgiven all that shouldn't talk about divorce if his poor wife loses her head for a minute. It's unbearable the privileges these men claim—and the double standard of morality they set up.

SEELIG.

These men?

MRS. SEELIG.

All of them. And that woman dramatist with her play was right. It is "a man's world."

SEELIG.

It's a pretty wise world, my dear.

ELINOR.

You think I should be made to suffer?

SEELIG.

I think you do suffer.

ELINOR.

That my offense is less forgivable than Frank's was?

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] You have my pity, Elinor, and shall have my help but I can't lie to you.

ELINOR.

That I'm more guilty than he?

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] Don't ask that of a Jew, my dear—however liberal in his religion he pretends to be. My father was an orthodox Rabbi—I know.

SEELIG.

What do you know?

MRS. SEELIG.

Our ancient law—from which all your ideas come. A man's past was his own. *He* was not forbidden as many wives as he wanted, but if a poor girl had made a mistake and concealed it from these lords of creation, she was stoned to death unless she was the daughter of a priest—in which case she was to be burnt alive. It's always been a man's world.

SEELIG.

Elinor. [*Pause.*] Do you hear that rattle of the railroad?

ELINOR.

Yes.

SEELIG.

All over this great land thousands of trains run every day starting and arriving in punctual agreement because this is *a woman's world*. The great steamships, dependable almost as the sun—a million factories in civilization—the countless looms and lathes of industry—the legions of labor that weave the riches of the world—all—all move by the mainspring of man's faith in woman—man's *faith*.

ELINOR.

I want *him* to have faith in me.

SEELIG.

This old world hangs together by love.

MRS. SEELIG.

Not man's love for woman.

SEELIG.

No—nor woman's love for man, but by the love of both—for the children.

ELINOR.

Dick!

SEELIG.

Men work for the children because they believe the children are—their own—*believe*. Every mother *knows* she is the mother of her son or daughter. Let her be however wicked, no power on earth can shake that knowledge. Every father believes he is a father only

by his faith in the woman. Let him be however virtuous, no power on earth can strengthen in him a conviction greater than that faith. There is a double standard of morality because upon the golden basis of woman's virtue rests the welfare of the world.

ELINOR.

Have I—lost *everything*?

SEELIG.

Frank must be convinced of your love and your loyalty.

ELINOR.

I *do* love him.

SEELIG.

Of course. [*To DE LOTA.*] Why are you here?

DE LOTA.

To—do any thing that is in my power—to assure Mrs. Clayton that she will have my protection if—it comes to the worst.

SEELIG.

Well—that's where it would be.

DE LOTA.

And there must be some things *you want* to say to me?

SEELIG.

There are.

HOOVER.

[*To SEELIG.*] Clayton's always had great respect for your opinion, Dr. Seelig.

SEELIG.

I'll see Clayton, of course. [*To MRS. SEELIG.*] You 'phoned me that Mr. Burrill—

MRS. SEELIG.

He's there. [*Indicates living room.*]

SEELIG.

Have you seen your grandson, Judge Hoover?

HOOVER.

No.

ELINOR.

You must—Dick's asked for you—[*Rises.*] Come.

SEELIG.

On your way out I'll see you again.

[*HOOVER and ELINOR go out.*]

SEELIG.

[*To MRS. SEELIG.*] You entertain Mr. Burrill a moment.

MRS. SEELIG.

He doesn't lack entertainment.

SEELIG.

What?

MRS. SEELIG.

Vedah's with him.

SEELIG.

[*Starting to door.*] I thought we'd agreed about that?

MRS. SEELIG.

Doesn't this trouble make a difference?

SEELIG.

It can't affect our decision concerning Burrill.

MRS. SEELIG.

Not before Vedah. [SEELIG *goes to living room.*]

DE LOTA.

Perhaps the trouble can be fixed, Mrs. Seelig—if the doctor talks to Clayton.

MRS. SEELIG.

It can't be "fixed" as you call it, with me.

DE LOTA.

You won't tell Vedah?

MRS. SEELIG.

I won't have to tell Vedah, she loves this artist.

DE LOTA.

But to marry a Christian!

MRS. SEELIG.

When she might have you.

DE LOTA.

It's taught me something.

MRS. SEELIG.

No doubt. But, I won't sacrifice my girl to finish your education.

[Re-enter SEELIG with BURRILL.]

SEELIG.

Mr. Burrill is going. He first wishes to speak with Mr. De Lota.

MRS. SEELIG.

Why?

SEELIG.

Sarah!

MRS. SEELIG.

Pardon.

BURRILL.

A business matter, Mrs. Seelig. If you are leaving, Mr. De Lota, I'll walk with you—if you permit.

DE LOTA.

I have some business with Dr. Seelig.

BURRILL.

Could you spare *us* a few minutes?

SEELIG.

Well? De Lota?

DE LOTA.

With pleasure.

SEELIG.

[*Going.*] Sarah.

MRS. SEELIG.

[*In undertone.*] You told him?

[SEELIG *nods.* *Goes out with* MRS. SEELIG.]

DE LOTA.

Well?

BURRILL.

I'm going to give you a chance to retire from this, Mr. De Lota, without exposure.

DE LOTA.

Good of you.

BURRILL.

Miss Seelig believes that you have served time in a penitentiary.

DE LOTA.

You told her that?

BURRILL.

I hadn't met you when I told Miss Seelig that the man who got an engagement in Antoine's Theatre for Mimi Chardenet had been in prison. Then you came into the room and told the rest yourself.

DE LOTA.

Miss Seelig's belief is based on those two remarks?

BURRILL.

Yes.

DE LOTA.

Reinforced, I suppose by your own opinion.

BURRILL.

I have tried to conceal my opinion.

DE LOTA.

What is your opinion, Mr. Burrill?

BURRILL.

That I saw you sentenced in the Cour d'Assizes to a year's imprisonment.

DE LOTA.

And you threaten to say so?

BURRILL.

I hope I'm a little cleaner than that, I threaten nothing.

DE LOTA.

What is it you're doing?

BURRILL.

I foresee trouble—I inform you of it.

DE LOTA.

You mean you foresee Miss Seelig asking me a question?

BURRILL.

Yes! I foresee your answer failing to satisfy. I foresee her doubt grow deeper—I foresee her going to her father with that doubt.

DE LOTA.

And then?

BURRILL.

I foresee Doctor Seelig asking what *I* know.

DE LOTA.

Ah! Now we have it. Disguised, but still the threat. You tell Doctor Seelig your belief.

BURRILL.

I shall decline to express my belief.

DE LOTA.

Same thing, isn't it? Your reluctance and your shrugs being quite as convincing.

BURRILL.

You can hardly ask me to lie for you.

DE LOTA.

Miss Vedah may believe me.

BURRILL.

No, she has asked me more than once to write to Paris.

DE LOTA.

It would make this bluff of fair play very convincing if you did write to persons whose names I can furnish you.

BURRILL.

You mean arrange a deception.

DELOTA.

I mean *write*—show Miss Seelig your letters. *Wait*—show her the answers.

BURRILL.

You make it pretty hard to keep still, believe me.

DELOTA.

You think I'm unworthy to marry this girl.

BURRILL.

I know you are.

DELOTA.

[*Pause.*] I'm going to tell you the truth about that Paris affair.

BURRILL.

I don't care to hear it.

DELOTA.

You don't want the truth?

BURRILL.

I don't want your confidence. I won't be bound by it.

DELOTA.

You're *a man's* man, Burrill—you fight in the open. Your part in this architect's row shows that. Now, in fair play— [*Telephone rings.*]

BURRILL.

Someone will come to answer that. Our interview's at an end.

DE LOTA.

Wait. [*Goes quickly to telephone and takes receiver from its hook.*] They may not come. [*Pause.*] I have served a year in a French prison. Captain Dreyfus served even longer for the same prejudice.

BURRILL.

Your crime was proven.

DE LOTA.

I'm as good as you, Mr. Burrill, or any bachelor that spends his several years in Paris. That imprisonment was a decoration.

BURRILL.

Rot!

DE LOTA.

I'm not a male *ingenue*. Doctor Seelig knows I've had my wild oats and I'll make a clean breast of it—my sufferings for my race will not be held against me. Vedah Seelig is a Jewess, remember, and—

BURRILL.

Be still, she's a clean, high-minded girl—she'll forgive adultery in you no quicker than she'd forgive it anywhere.

DE LOTA.

You think so?

BURRILL.

I do.

DE LOTA.

And that belief determines you to bring it to her knowledge?

BURRILL.

It is already brought to her knowledge. You did that.

DE LOTA.

And you make the consequence as sinister as if it had been planned?

BURRILL.

I won't conspire to hoodwink a girl into marrying you.

[Enter SEELIG.] [Pause.]

SEELIG.

That 'phone rang?

DE LOTA.

Yes—I was going to answer it.

SEELIG.

I answered it—on the branch—upstairs. I heard what you were saying.

BURRILL.

Through that?

SEELIG.

Yes.

[SEELIG replaces receiver on phone.]

DE LOTA.

I was telling Mr. Burrill a story—for a magazine.

SEELIG.

[*To BURRILL.*] Is that true?

BURRILL.

I can't answer you.

SEELIG.

In prison!

DE LOTA.

The man I was quoting.

SEELIG.

Why should a man in a story say: "Vedah Seelig is a Jewess, remember." Why should Mr. Burrill interrupt you to defend her?

BURRILL.

Good day, Doctor.

[*BURRILL goes.*]

SEELIG.

Your confession—just now—[*Indicates phone.*]

DE LOTA.

At that time in Paris, with public hatred at a white heat, an obsolete law was dug up to persecute a foreigner and a Jew.

SEELIG.

What law?

DE LOTA.

Imprisoning a man on the complaint of a woman's husband.

SEELIG.

We are fortunate to learn it.

DE LOTA.

There are some Jews I'd expect to condemn me—apostates, renegades, that join the wolves, but not you. That imprisonment was my share of the hatred the race sustains. You're big enough to see that and dismiss it. As for the offense itself—well—you know men, Doctor Seelig. You're a physician—not a Rabbi.

SEELIG.

Clayton's home was not your first adventure?

DE LOTA.

I didn't know this man in Paris.

SEELIG.

You knew Clayton?

DE LOTA.

Yes.

SEELIG.

That's enough.

DE LOTA.

And Mrs. Clayton?

SEELIG.

What of her?

DE LOTA.

You brought her *here*.

S E E L I G.

Well?

D E L O T A.

You excuse her and condemn me?

S E E L I G.

[*Pause.*] There is a cynical maxim that every country has the kind of Jews it deserves. This generous New York deserves the best. A Jew has destroyed the home of a benefactor, a Jew intimate in my own home approved by me and mine. I shall do what I can to repair that destruction.

D E L O T A.

There's some extenuation.

S E E L I G.

What?

D E L O T A.

This engagement to Vedah is not the first time I have believed I was in love. There was one other—when I was much younger. The father of the Christian girl was a Jew-baiter.

S E E L I G.

Well?

D E L O T A.

I was thrown over—not because I wasn't a man—not because I hadn't ability—nor ambition—nor strength nor promise of success but—I was a Jew.

SEELIG.

You will pay that price—the price of being a Jew—almost every day of your life.

DE LOTA.

I know—in money—in opportunity—in sensibilities—yes; but that time I paid it—with all those and—more. [*Pause.*] Consider then the temptation when that woman who had thrown me over and married her Christian found that she still could listen to the Jew.

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] This would be a proud moment for me, Benjamin, if one of my own people had told me that story just as you have told it except—that his revenge had been to protect this Christian woman from herself.

CLAYTON

[*Noise at door.*] [*CLAYTON enters violently.*]

[*To HOLLAND who restrains him.*] Don't put your hand on my arm. [*Seeing DE LOTA.*] I thought so.

SEELIG.

[*Interposing.*] Thought what?

CLAYTON.

I called you on the 'phone—I heard that dog's voice.

SEELIG.

One moment—[*To DE LOTA, who confronts CLAYTON.*] Go. [*DE LOTA starts out.*]

CLAYTON.

He came here to see *her*.

DE LOTA.

[*Angrily returning.*] Yes. To see her!

SEELIG.

[*Loudly and again interposing.*] I said go.

[DE LOTA *sullenly goes.*]

CLAYTON.

And you stand for it. Your house.

SEELIG.

Judge Hoover was with Mrs. Clayton—also Mrs. Seelig—then I.

CLAYTON.

And my boy. Where was Dick?

SEELIG.

In his room.

CLAYTON.

Well, I *want* him. *He* shan't be corrupted by their damned assignations.

SEELIG.

His first call, Frank, and his last.

CLAYTON.

That part of it doesn't interest me.

SEELIG.

And your threatened divorce was the reason?

CLAYTON.

I thought they'd get together on that. Well—I want Dick. [*Pause.*] Send for him, please.

SEELIG.

In a minute. He'll be glad to see you—but you mustn't say anything before him you'll regret.

CLAYTON.

I promise. I just want him, that's all.

SEELIG.

He's with his mother, you know.

CLAYTON.

Well?

SEELIG.

And Judge Hoover is also with Elinor.

CLAYTON.

What of it?

SEELIG.

Nothing—except—well, the boy. There mustn't be a dispute, Frank.

CLAYTON.

Say that to *them*.

SEELIG.

And you can't treat Mrs. Clayton as tho' she were a guilty woman.

CLAYTON.

Why can't I?

SEELIG.

Because in the *first* place she isn't guilty.

CLAYTON.

Isn't?

SEELIG.

No.

CLAYTON.

She fools you, Seelig.

SEELIG.

The physician who takes a woman through the sacred crises of her life—mental as well as physical—can't be deceived, Frank, and in the *second* place you have forfeited the right to judge her—you came into court yourself unclean.

CLAYTON.

And therefore can't resent adultery.

SEELIG.

Her defiant visit to De Lota's rooms wasn't adultery.

CLAYTON.

Damnation! when a woman's gone that far, the specific degrees of her behavior aren't important.

SEELIG.

They're very important, especially when they show recovery. A woman who stops at the edge of the precipice instead of taking the headlong plunge, mustn't be thrown into the gulf—and that by the man she herself had already rescued—by the man whose brutality forced her into the peril.

CLAYTON.

Brutality!

SEELIG.

A word ill chosen—I meant bestiality—who are you to pass sentence upon her?

CLAYTON.

Unfortunately the man who married her.

SEELIG.

Why! Dismiss the moral view of marriage. Consider it only as our modern and manly and commercial mind is organized to consider it—a civil covenant—no more.

CLAYTON.

What then?

SEELIG.

Why, even then your position is that of a thief—a confessed embezzler—complaining in his hypocrisy of what?—that his partner's books appear inaccurate. That is the proportion. On the sacred side of the relation you are doubly guilty—guilty of your immoral conduct—guilty of your base example and guilty of goading a good woman into desperate things. For God's sake, Frank Clayton,

cleanse your mind of its masculine conceit, prejudice, selfishness and partiality—recognize your own destructive work—admit it—regret it, undo it, and ask a good woman's forgiveness.

[CLAYTON *laughs ironically.*

[HOOVER and ELINOR enter. *Her appearance stills* CLAYTON, *as he turns and sees her.*

ELINOR.

Frank? [*Extends her hand pleadingly.*

CLAYTON.

Well?

ELINOR.

I'm in the dust—forgive me.

SEELIG.

[*In undertone.*] Judge—

[*Starts out, HOOVER following.*

CLAYTON.

[*Checking them.*] No—none of that. Let's not contrive any interview of repentance.

ELINOR.

You—you're not going to drag the—whole story into the courts.

CLAYTON.

I'm going to—[*Pause.*] do only what is necessary.

ELINOR.

[*Sits—speaks with effort at control.*] *As we forgive*—those that trespass against us—

CLAYTON.

It's too late to adjust matters with a few appropriate quotations.

HOOVER.

You won't waive any right by a reasonable delay.

SEELIG.

None—so for pity's sake, Frank, tell Colonel Emory to wait.

CLAYTON.

I've retained my own counsel—I don't ask other advice.

ELINOR.

[*Brokenly.*] Why—why do you come to *see* me?

CLAYTON.

I don't! I came because your friend Mr. De Lota was here *with* you.

ELINOR.

Frank!

HOOVER.

I brought De Lota.

CLAYTON.

[*Explosively.*] I don't object. [*Then with fateful control.*] I'm just going to take Dick out of the muck, that's all.

ELINOR.

Dick!

H O O V E R.

[*Bristling.*] The law prescribes the only way that—

E L I N O R.

[*Quickly interposing.*] Father—don't—don't. We mustn't talk of law and its wrangle over Dick. Frank's perfectly right. If I were meeting Mr. De Lota after the terrible mistake of that night Dick shouldn't be in my care at all. [*Turns to CLAYTON.*] It—it was on account of the suit—that's all. If you let Colonel Emory do that cruel thing without believing me. Father brought him—Dick wasn't here. I said that I wouldn't bring up my jealousy of that woman in Paris—nothing to blacken the name of Dick's *father*—didn't I? [*Turns to HOOVER.*]

H O O V E R.

She did.

E L I N O R.

[*Again to CLAYTON.*] You must see Dick—but leave him here, Frank, until you know the very truth—about—it all. You get him, father—

H O O V E R.

[*Going.*] Of course. I've seen fifty cases that looked worse than this smoothed out by a little patience.

E L I N O R.

[*Anxiously.*] Get Dick.

C L A Y T O N.

You saw De Lota?

E L I N O R.

With father.

HOOVER.

[*Turning.*] De Lota's statement to me, Frank was identical with Elinor's.

CLAYTON.

Never mind.

HOOVER.

[*Coming back.*] I've got to mind—you're not informed. Elinor and De Lota were friends before you ever came to New York. [ELINOR *tries to silence* HOOVER.]

CLAYTON.

Friends?

ELINOR.

[*Pause, and as CLAYTON glares at her.*] Yes. [To HOOVER.] Get Dick. Go—don't say any more.
[HOOVER *goes.*]

CLAYTON.

[*Accusingly.*] I introduced De Lota to you only a year ago.

ELINOR.

I know, but—

CLAYTON.

Why pretend you were not acquainted?

ELINOR.

I—I was considering his feelings.

CLAYTON.

What do you mean by *that*?

ELINOR.

Before I knew you—we were engaged.

CLAYTON.

Engaged.

ELINOR.

He and I. Father objected on account of De Lota's race—and—Father forbade me ever to speak of it in his hearing. When you and I met I was still over-sensitive about it and—.

CLAYTON.

[*Furiously.*] No, by God! It won't do. You can't square it. I see it now. I've been a dupe for years and years.

ELINOR.

I never saw him again until you brought him home.

CLAYTON.

Don't, I'm through with it. [*Going.*]

ELINOR.

Frank—don't go—wait! See Dick!

CLAYTON.

[*Turning.*] Dick.

ELINOR.

You must see your boy.

CLAYTON.

My boy! How do I know he's my boy?

[*ELINOR and SEELIG both exclaim.*]

ELINOR.

Oh!

SEELIG.

Frank!

CLAYTON.

You've lived a lie about that blackguard all along until I trap you in his room.

ELINOR.

But Dick—our baby Dick. For God's sake, Frank, don't say a thing like that.

CLAYTON.

Why not, if it's here—here—[*Striking forehead.*] And hell itself can't burn it out.

SEELIG.

[*At the door.*] Frank—it's the boy.

CLAYTON.

No—no!

[*Turns and goes rapidly out by the other door.*]

[*Enter DICK.*]

ELINOR.

[*To SEELIG.*] What have I done? I didn't know—I didn't know.

DICK.

[*To ELINOR.*] Where's Papa?

ELINOR.

[*With a heart-broken cry.*] Ah! [*Kneels and takes DICK in her arms.*] My boy—my boy—[*Brushes back his hair.*] Our baby—boy. [*Kisses and embraces him hysterically, sobbing.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.



ACT FOUR



CENE: Same as Act II, the Lounging Room at Clayton's. A large couch is drawn up in front of fire. The room is lighted only by the lamp on the small table and a candelabrum near the telephone. The pictures on the wall are awry, and there is a look of general desolation about the place. A window is open at left side of room and the sound of church bells comes in.

DISCOVERED: CLAYTON on couch near fire—steamer rug over him—he in dressing gown and slippers. His shoes are on floor.

[Enter SUTTON from dining-room carrying tray.]

SUTTON.

I beg pardon, sir.

CLAYTON.

Well?

SUTTON.

I've a bowl of bouillon and some toast—I thought maybe you'd try it, sir.

CLAYTON.

[Indifferently.] Thank you, Sutton.

SUTTON.

[Putting tray on table at head of the couch.] Shall I put it nearer? *[CLAYTON shakes head.]* If you'd rather have a milk punch, sir?

CLAYTON.

No.

SUTTON.

Or an egg-nogg—[CLAYTON *shakes head*.

CLAYTON.

You might shut that window.

SUTTON.

Yes, sir. [*Going to the window*.

CLAYTON.

Those damn bells—

SUTTON.

Yes, sir. [*Closes window*.

CLAYTON.

When did Doctor Seeling say he'd come?

SUTTON.

As soon as possible.

CLAYTON.

And it's been three hours.

SUTTON.

Nearly three hours, yes, sir. There's the door—may be Doctor now.

[*Goes to hall*.

[CLAYTON *re-arranges pillow and lies down again*.

[HOOVER'S *voice is heard outside*.

SUTTON.

[*Also outside.*] He's lying down—in the smoking room.

[*Enter* SUTTON.

[*HOOVER and ELINOR appear in hallway.*

SUTTON.

[*Leaning over the back of the couch.*] Pardon, sir—
Judge Hoover!

CLAYTON.

[*Shaking head.*] No—

SUTTON.

And Mrs. Clayton, sir.

CLAYTON.

[*Sitting up.*] Here?

HOOVER.

[*Entering.*] I don't want to intrude, Frank, but—it seems necessary. Come in, Elinor!

[*SUTTON goes.*] [*ELINOR comes down to the couch.*

CLAYTON.

You'll have to see my attorney. I'm not able to talk any business.

ELINOR.

[*Tenderly.*] You're ill, Frank?

CLAYTON.

[*Coldly.*] Resting a minute—

ELINOR.

I'm sorry to disturb you, but—it's for Dick. [*Pause.*]
[CLAYTON *motions slightly to a chair which HOOVER places*—ELINOR *sits.*] You know that to-morrow is—a holiday?
[CLAYTON *nods.*] Dick's eager about it—

CLAYTON.

[*Complainingly to HOOVER.*] This isn't necessary, is it?

ELINOR.

Dick's talked for days about his tree and hanging up his stocking by the big fireplace at home. Our difference, Frank, mustn't put a blight on the boy's Christmas.

CLAYTON.

[*In undertone.*] My God! What drivels!

ELINOR.

Drivel when I repeat it—if you will—but not as little Dick talks it day after day. His love for you isn't drivels.

CLAYTON.

[*To HOOVER.*] You promised Emory to begin suit if I'd keep quiet.

HOOVER.

Yes.

CLAYTON.

Nearly a month ago.

HOOVER.

I know—but—[*Turns to ELINOR.*

ELINOR.

I refuse. There's nothing left me to live for but my baby and his happiness. I won't—I won't bring an accusation against his father—[CLAYTON *moves away wearily to mantel*—ELINOR *rises*.] You *are* his father and only your wish to crush me makes you pretend to doubt it. I've forfeited your love, I know—I'm not here to plead against that—but to avoid any scar I can for the boy's heart. I want you to let Dick come here to-morrow—[CLAYTON *moves impatiently*.] Not with *me*—with Miss Doane. I want you to see him—and take him in your arms—

CLAYTON.

[*Shakes head*.] No—

HOOVER.

[*With some indignation*.] Whatever he is—he's a child. and for seven years this was his home.

CLAYTON.

There'll be other anniversaries. He may as well learn now.

ELINOR.

No—not now. When he's old enough to understand I'll *tell* him—the truth.

CLAYTON.

What is the truth?

ELINOR.

That his mother—was a foolish woman who thought her husband didn't understand her. That his father punished

her out of all proportion to her offense, but only as *women* must expect punishment.

CLAYTON.

[*Sneering.*] I know—because *men* are brutes.

ELINOR.

Because—God has put into woman's keeping a trust—of which no one—neither husbands nor fathers tell them truly—about which the world in its vain disputes of equality misleads them—of which they learn only through their own suffering.

CLAYTON.

[*Leaving ELINOR and going to HOOVER.*] This kind of thing is—what I try to escape.

ELINOR.

[*Following.*] Let Dick spend his Christmas morning here. [CLAYTON *shakes head.*] You used to ask after him every day until you took this cruel pose of pretending that he's not *your* boy.

CLAYTON.

[*To HOOVER.*] Please—

ELINOR.

I couldn't tell you in Doctor Seelig's presence plainly enough. You know Father's insane antipathy to—[*Pause.*] to *those people*. Any word—the most sacred—any name—the most honored—by scornful repetition becomes a reproach, and I had grown fearful of ridicule about my former friendship for—Ben De Lota. That was my sole reason for silence.

CLAYTON.

[*Wearily.*] My God!

HOOVER.

Elinor, Frank! [*Indicates hall.*

BURRILL.

[*Outside.*] Is he too ill to be seen a moment?

HOOVER.

[*Peering cautiously into hall.*] Woman, too.

[*Enter* SUTTON.

SUTTON.

Mr. Burrill, sir.

CLAYTON.

I said no one but Doctor Seelig.

SUTTON:

Miss Seelig, Doctor's daughter, is with Mr. Burrill.

ELINOR.

Father! [*Going quickly out by dining room door.*

HOOVER.

[*Following.*] I want a word, Frank, when they're gone.

CLAYTON.

But not with *her*.

HOOVER.

No—she'll go.

[*HOOVER leaves.*

CLAYTON.

My coat! [SUTTON gets CLAYTON's coat and waistcoat from the table—CLAYTON takes them and nods for SUTTON to go.

[SUTTON goes.

[CLAYTON feebly unbuttons his dressing gown, pauses, wearily throws coat and waistcoat to a chair from which they slip to the floor. CLAYTON sits on the couch.

[BURRILL and VEDAH enter.

BURRILL.

Sorry to disturb you, Mr. Clayton.

VEDAH.

And your man says you're not well.

CLAYTON.

Nothing! Won't you be seated? [VEDAH takes chair BURRILL places for her.

BURRILL.

I'm—[Pause.] That is, we're—well, I wanted to thank you for my contract on the court-house sculpture.

CLAYTON.

They gave it to you, did they?

BURRILL.

Yes. The finished marble must be up in a year. Material—workmen—studio—everything's cheaper on the other side—

CLAYTON.

I know.

BURRILL.

So I'm sailing day after to-morrow—unless you need me here in the architect's libel suit!

CLAYTON.

They've withdrawn that.

BURRILL.

They have? [CLAYTON *nods*. BURRILL *turns eagerly to* VEDAH.] Then we go—

VEDAH.

Yes!

BURRILL.

Vedah and I have been married.

CLAYTON.

Married?

BURRILL.

Half an hour ago.

VEDAH.

Yes. [*Rises and stands by* BURRILL.]

BURRILL.

[*Taking* VEDAH's *hand*.] I'm the happiest man alive.

CLAYTON.

[*Moodily*.] Half an hour? Ah, yes. [*With an effort rises and goes to them*.] Well, I congratulate you both.

V E D A H.

Papa and Mama don't know it yet. [BURRILL *goes to the fireplace.*

C L A Y T O N.

An elopement?

V E D A H.

Is it? If we didn't leave the city?

[*Enter* SUTTON.

Mrs. Seeling, sir.

[VEDAH *anxiously goes to* BURRILL.

[*Enter* MRS. SEELIG.

[SUTTON *goes out.*

M R S. S E E L I G.

Vedah. [*Sees* BURRILL.] You know your father's wishes.

B U R R I L L.

We've been married, Mrs. Seelig.

M R S. S E E L I G.

Vedah!

V E D A H.

Yes, Mama.

M R S. S E E L I G.

When?

V E D A H.

At five o'clock.

M R S. S E E L I G.

How? Who married you?

BURRILL.

A Justice of the Peace.

MRS. SEELIG.

Frank! [*Turns to* CLAYTON.

VEDAH.

[*Going to her mother.*] Remember your parents objected to Papa.

MRS. SEELIG.

[*To* CLAYTON.] My father was a Rabbi—Doctor Seelig's ideas were advanced—even his own people thought so.

VEDAH.

No couple could be happier than you have been.

MRS. SEELIG.

Is *this* happiness—my only daughter runs away—why? To-day? Why secretly?

BURRILL.

I'm sailing for Paris.

VEDAH.

[*Returning to* BURRILL.] To be gone a year.

BURRILL.

The separation was impossible.

MRS. SEELIG.

Couldn't you have trusted Vedah that long?

V E D A H.

It was *I*, Mama.

M R S. S E E L I G.

You?

V E D A H.

To risk a sculptor in Paris? Oh no!

M R S. S E E L I G.

Well, go home and tell your poor father.

V E D A H.

I want you with us, Mama.

B U R R I L L.

I'm willing to tell the Doctor alone.

V E D A H.

[*In alarm.*] No.

M R S. S E E L I G.

Very well, wait for me and we'll meet Papa together.

V E D A H.

[*To CLAYTON.*] Good-bye!

[*They shake hands.*]

C L A Y T O N.

Good-bye. [*Shakes hands with BURRILL.*] *Bon voyage.*

B U R R I L L.

Thank you. [*Starts out with VEDAH.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Impulsively.*] Vedah! [VEDAH turns, MRS. SEELIG embraces and kisses her.]

BURRILL

Thank you, Mrs. Seelig. [*Goes out with VEDAH.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Sighing and turning to CLAYTON who is at the fire-place.*] I left Elinor—waiting for Judge Hoover. When I go back I want to carry her some comfort.

CLAYTON.

Your arrival will do that, Mrs. Seelig.

MRS. SEELIG.

I hope so. This is Christmas Eve, you know.

CLAYTON.

Yes.

MRS. SEELIG.

Little Dick has always found his stocking—in there.
[*Indicates the music room.*]

CLAYTON.

Mrs. Clayton mustn't use Dick to break down my decision.

MRS. SEELIG.

I bought a little tree—[*Indicates its height.*] I caught the Christian shopkeeper smiling—but no matter. I had Sutton take it in at the tradesman's entrance. [CLAYTON

turns away.] I know. You think that is more indelicacy characteristic of the race—but Vedah is going with that young man—my own heart is alive to the suffering around us. *Yours?*—yes! it comes soon enough to us all—but Frank!—that little boy who is—

CLAYTON.

Please! Mrs. Seelig, the doctor's ordered me to avoid all excitement. [*Sits wearily on couch.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Sympathetically.*] He didn't tell *us*.

CLAYTON.

Not Doctor Seelig.

MRS. SEELIG.

Oh!

CLAYTON.

A specialist—but he doesn't help me. Sutton 'phoned and I'm waiting for Doctor Seelig now.

MRS. SEELIG.

Now? I can't meet him here. But that tree's in the house and you must let us bring Dick over.

[*Enter HOOVER.*]

HOOVER.

Pardon.

MRS. SEELIG.

I'm going—Good night.

[*She goes.*]

CLAYTON.

[*Pause.*] Where is—?

HOOVER.

Elinor? [*Clayton nods.*] She left immediately. [CLAYTON *lies down on couch.*] She's—not—a bad woman, Frank! What she said about my opposition was true—but we all learn. I didn't know the hearts those people had in 'em—[*Pause.*] And her girlish affair with De Lota was—well, you know Elinor's craze for music. That's the explanation—attraction was mostly artistic.

[*Enter SUTTON.*]

Doctor Seelig.

CLAYTON.

You'll have to excuse me, Judge.

HOOVER.

Sorry to see you—ill, old man.

[*Enter SEELIG.*]

SEELIG.

Good evening.

HOOVER.

Good evening, Doctor. [*Going, extends hand.*] I wish you—[*Pause.*] the compliments of the season.

SEELIG.

The same to you, Judge.

[HOOVER *goes.*] [SUTTON *takes SEELIG's hat and coat.*]

SEELIG.

Well, Frank—under the weather? [*Leans over back of couch.*]

CLAYTON.

Pretty rotten.

SEELIG.

Need a little air in here.

CLAYTON.

I couldn't stand the damned bells.

SEELIG.

Better stand them a minute.

[*Opens window. The sound of church bells is heard.*]

CLAYTON.

"Peace on earth, good will to men."

SEELIG.

How long have you been this way? [*Taking CLAYTON's pulse.*]

CLAYTON.

Been here—since last night.

SEELIG.

Drinking?

CLAYTON.

Very little.

SEELIG.

Pain anywhere?

CLAYTON.

Some—back of my neck near the shoulders.

SEELIG.

Headache? [CLAYTON *shakes head.*] No other pains?
[CLAYTON *shakes head.*] What kept you in the house?

CLAYTON.

I feel all in—rotten tired.

SEELIG.

I'd have come earlier, Frank, but a long list. Then there was an accident to a little chap on Third Avenue—they brought him to the hospital—smaller than your boy. We operate on him at eight-thirty. [*Regards watch.*] When I got away from that the police stopped us at every cross street. Wonderful sight on the Avenue—people seem to have money. I think a prosperity Christmas.

[*Picks up the coat and waistcoat from the floor—folds them. Straightens pictures on wall.*]

CLAYTON.

Can't we have that window closed now? [*Pause—SEELIG closes the window, shutting out the sound of the bells.*] Ha! "Glad tidings of great joy."

SEELIG.

Comes only once a year.

CLAYTON.

You any respect for the whole business—that Christ fabrication?

SEELIG.

[*Going to fireplace.*] You mean the Church idea—the creeds?

CLAYTON.

Yes.

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] I've outgrown the one my own mother started me in, but I take off my hat to the man.

CLAYTON.

Why!

SEELIG.

Oh, He knew—He'd worked it all out.

CLAYTON.

Worked what out?

SEELIG.

This thing we call Life. He knew the essence of it.

CLAYTON.

I don't see that.

SEELIG.

"As a man thinketh"—that was His answer.

CLAYTON.

What does that answer?

SEELIG.

Everything. When I felt your pulse there and let go your hand you carried it back to the couch—so.

CLAYTON.

Expect me to keep it out there like a hat-rack?

SEELIG.

I'd hoped you would drop it a little.

CLAYTON.

Why?

SEELIG.

Hoped you'd relax. Let's try it now. [*Lifts CLAYTON's hand.*] Don't tense those muscles—put your weight on me. [*Drops hand.*] There!

CLAYTON.

Well, what does that do?

SEELIG.

That's the only part of your body that's relaxed—Now a deep breath and let go. Don't hold yourself up from the couch. So! [*CLAYTON does as told and perceptibly relaxes.*]

CLAYTON.

Nerves, I know.

SEELIG.

[*Tapping his own forehead.*] It's this. Why, I have patients—business men—who are always tied up like a wet fishing line—sleep that way. Do you know why that wrinkle is between your eyes?

CLAYTON.

I'm sick, that's why.

SEELIG.

Because the wrinkle's in your mind. That coat I took from the floor said mental wrinkles, "As a man thinketh," my dear Frank. [*Pause.*] What is it now—come?

CLAYTON.

You don't have to ask, do you?

SEELIG.

I do ask.

CLAYTON.

Just to keep my mind on it, I suppose?

SEELIG.

No—I want to hear you talk about it.

CLAYTON.

My mind will be all right, I'll be all right, when that damned dog is dead in hell!

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] You hate him pretty bitterly, don't you?

CLAYTON.

I hate him the best I know how.

SEELIG.

You know what good hating does to the hater?

CLAYTON.

You mean to me?

SEELIG.

[*Nodding.*] To everybody. Kills him.

CLAYTON.

Kills him?

[*SEELIG nods.*]

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] Hate generates one of the deadliest poisons in nature. I've had trouble in my time saving a baby that had nursed milk from the breast of an angry woman. You've heard of the bite of a blue gum negro being poison.

CLAYTON.

Knew a man who lost his thumb that way.

SEELIG.

Well, it is no more poisonous than the bite of a red gum negro, or the bite of a red gum white man, if either of them gets angry enough, the blue gum negro is just a little nearer the animal and gets mad quicker, that's all. Now, you lie here with this grouch of yours and you generate constantly an internal poison. I haven't any medicines that can beat that.

CLAYTON.

When I get so much of it in me that I shoot that cur, as I shall some day, they'll call it murder.

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] I used to get pretty angry when I was younger, but I think it was more to show off.

CLAYTON.

You mean I do this to "show off!"

SEELIG.

I mean you are influenced by public opinion. If you and he were the only creatures left in the world you'd admit he didn't do much more than you'd have done in his place.

CLAYTON.

You mean I'd go into another man's home and ruin it?

SEELIG.

This man didn't come into your home and ruin it. He meets an old sweetheart, meets her when she thinks she is being neglected.

CLAYTON.

[*Sitting up.*] Neglected? Why, she had this house and our summer place at Newport—a forty-five horse power limousine—she had—

SEELIG.

See here, Frank, you were neglecting her. He did what nine men out of ten would do. He knows the price that's being paid, and I know, that he'd walk around the Belt Line to-night in the snow, barefooted, to have the record closed.

CLAYTON.

Suppose you think I ought to hunt him up and shake hands with him?

S E E L I G.

No—don't think you should ever see him again, even mentally; but it doesn't need murder to acquire that attitude. I want you to be big enough to dismiss it. That's why I quote this carpenter-prophet of Nazareth—a truth that took me a postgraduate course to learn and twenty-five years to demonstrate—He found out by himself. He said in one of his first sermons: "*Forgive*, and ye shall be forgiven; *give* and it shall be given unto you, good measure pressed down, shaken together and running over shall men give unto your bosom."

C L A Y T O N.

Oh that religious elation—

S E E L I G.

It wasn't religion He was preaching, but a good working rule of life. This precept of good-will—people regard the words "Good-will" as interchangeable with "Peace," but will is active, good will is a constructive force. I've seen sick people get well merely through two or three hearty good wishers rooting for them. I've figured it out that there's an influence circulating through all men when they'll permit it, just as the current through that lamp goes through all other lamps in this house. Stop it in the man by avarice or cupidity, divert it by envy, *turn it back* by hate, and something goes wrong with the machinery. "Give and it shall be given unto you."

C L A Y T O N.

You take Him too literally, Doctor.

S E E L I G.

The mistake is not taking Him *literally enough*. I've cured many taking that sermon literally. [*Sits beside*

CLAYTON *on his couch.*] I find what is on the patient's mind. Generally some hate or fear—sometimes regret or remorse—then I try to show the patient that yesterday is yesterday, that his past life doesn't concern him any more than last year's snow. If I can get a man looking ahead—hopeful—anxious to get on the job—why he's cured.

CLAYTON.

[*Doggedly.*] I'll look ahead when I get even with this fellow.

SEELIG.

Well, say you've got even—that you've dealt him some deadly blow, irreparably injured him or his happiness! What then? My dear Frank, there is nothing so disappointing as a satisfied revenge.

CLAYTON.

I can't forget it.

SEELIG.

Yes you can.

CLAYTON.

It's here on my mind. [*Covers his eyes and forehead.*]

SEELIG.

Because your mind is empty. Work is the answer to your condition.

CLAYTON.

[*Shaking his head.*] Too late for that now.

SEELIG.

Nonsense! Take this parable of the eleventh hour. The men in that were kicking because those who had worked one

hour got as much as those who had put in a full day. Remember what the Nazarene proposed to pay.

CLAYTON.

What?

SEELIG.

Peace of mind. A sharehold in what He called the Kingdom of Heaven. The eleventh hour men worked only one hour, but they worked—the *last hour*. You get that peace of mind, whenever—you work, whenever you *do* something—and the splendid thing is, it's *never too late to do it*. [*Rises vigorously—stands at mantel.*]

CLAYTON.

[*Wearily.*] Good God, Doctor, a man can't get up and work at something he doesn't care for in order to forget something he's thinking of all the time. It's well enough for you—always called in by some poor devil who thinks you can help him. Give me your job and your equipment for it and I'll talk hope and clean living myself.

SEELIG.

[*Half sadly.*] I know that attitude. It's always the next pasture that seems the greenest. If I have any regret it is that instead of being a physician I wasn't a priest. I think most diseases are not physical so much as they are mental or spiritual.

CLAYTON.

Well, I'd like to do that kind of thing myself.

SEELIG.

You can do it.

CLAYTON.

I can?

SEELIG.

Yes—only you have to *begin*.

CLAYTON.

You mean with myself?

SEELIG.

I mean with the work that's nearest to you, Frank. If I wanted you to walk around Central Park you would have to get up, you would have to walk to the door; you would have to go down the steps; you would have to *walk* to Central Park. In other words, you would have to cover the ground that is nearest to you. Now, in the work you say you would like to do, you've also got to cover the ground that's nearest you. Suppose you *were* going to *save* somebody and you had your choice—whom would you save? Why, the people dearest to you. You would save—little Dick—eh?

CLAYTON.

[*In pain.*] Don't talk of Dick.

SEELIG.

I've got to talk of him. The boy isn't getting a father's care.

CLAYTON.

You advised me not to take him.

SEELIG.

I still advise that. He *is* getting a mother's care, but he needs a father's also. Now suppose you could save little

Dick. The next dearest person to you would be his mother, wouldn't she?

CLAYTON.

She's made her bed.

SEELIG.

Yes, but after you've made beds there's something more to do than lie in them. After a reasonable time you are to get up and get *out* of them.

CLAYTON.

She's all right—free to do as she likes.

SEELIG.

No, she isn't. She's a slave to her remorse—she's looking back. *She* can't realize that yesterday is yesterday and that a dead yesterday is just as dead as Babylon. Now, you want work to do—why not do that?

CLAYTON.

Overlook what she's done?

SEELIG.

Yes—overlook what she's done. She wasn't perfect—nobody is. She makes one mistake—with you it's final. You don't judge anyone else that way. I've seen you throwing little Dick the baseball teaching him to hold it and not to break his chubby fingers—standing two yards from him—drop and drop and drop it. You didn't get tired—you were developing the boy. Now the assumption is that Elinor came to you with her character fully developed; but my dear old friend, character never stops developing

if we are in the right line. There's still the perfecting of a fine woman. You want something to do—do that.

CLAYTON.

All right—Tell her.—[*Pause.*] I forgive her. [*Pause.*] but that I'm through with it just the same.

SEELIG.

I'll not carry lies to her. If you forgive her you'll go where she is—you'll go looking forward and not backward—[CLAYTON *shakes head, pause*—SEELIG *regards watch.*] I hate to leave you in this mood, Frank.

CLAYTON.

I'll—be all right.

SEELIG.

Why not get in the machine and take a run through the Park—only a half hour—because I must get back to the hospital.

CLAYTON.

[*Pause.*] You won't try any snap judgment on me—no driving up to your door and making a scene of it?

SEELIG.

Chauffeur will take your order.

[*Pause.* CLAYTON *begins to put on his shoes.* SEELIG *goes to the telephone.*

CLAYTON.

What are you doing?

SEELIG.

I can't be home to dinner. [*'Phones.*] Yes—operator. Give me 319 Plaza—Plaza—yes.

CLAYTON.

I think—[*Pause.*] Mrs. Seelig was here; just before you came—

SEELIG.

Yes?

CLAYTON.

[*Pause.*] They *expect* you at dinner.

SEELIG.

[*Phoning.*] Holland? [*Pause.*] This is Doctor—I'll speak to Mrs. Seelig—[*Speaks to CLAYTON.*] What did she want?

CLAYTON.

Oh—Dick's Christmas principally.

SEELIG.

That reminds me—I told Dick I'd see *you* [*'Phones.*] Hello?—yes Sarah? I can't get home to dinner dear—[*Pause.*] No—impossible. [*Pause.*] I'm at Frank Clayton's—[*Pause.*] Nothing—that is, nothing serious. He's going out with me—just to get the air, that's all. What's that? [*Pause.*] Yes, I'll speak to her.

CLAYTON.

Speak to whom?

SEELIG.

[*Speaking to CLAYTON.*] Mrs. Seelig wants to know if I won't speak to your wife. [*Phones.*] Hello—that you, Elinor? [*Pause.*] Yes—he's all right—perfectly. [*Pause.*] Not yet, but we're going out—in the car—I'll give it to him.

CLAYTON.

Give what?

SEELIG.

Just a minute. [*Turns to CLAYTON who is putting on his coat.*] It was a Christmas gift—from little Dick—he asked me to bring it here.

CLAYTON.

What is it?

[*SEELIG takes small package from his pocket and hands it to CLAYTON. As CLAYTON opens package SEELIG turns attention to 'phone again.*]

SEELIG.

Yes, I'm still here—yes. [*Listens in silence as CLAYTON undoes the package which contains a photograph in a leather case. CLAYTON bends over it, deeply moved.*] Yes—yes—very well—thank you—good night.

CLAYTON.

[*Quickly.*] Wait.

SEELIG.

[*Startled by loudness of CLAYTON's call.*] Wait. [*Laughs and explains.*] I said wait a minute.

CLAYTON.

She at that 'phone?

SEELIG.

Yes.

CLAYTON.

[*Angrily.*] Let me have it—there are a few things I want to say to her.

SEELIG.

[*Protesting.*] Not in that mood, Frank.

CLAYTON.

It's all a frame up to torture me. [*Takes 'phone—speaks angrily.*] Hello! [*Anger goes from his face—whole manner changes—tone becomes gentle and affectionate.*] Dick, that you, Dick? [*Pause.*] Yes, I hear you—[*Pause.*] I got it, my boy, thank you—[*Pause.*] You bet I like it—[*Pause.*] The tree? [*Pause.*] Yes, by the big fireplace—[*Pause.*] To-night? Well—[*Pause.*] Then—[*Pause and effort.*] Tell her to come—with you!

[*Drops 'phone on table, receiver hanging towards the floor. Sinks into chair face down on elbow sobbing. SEELIG walks to 'phone, hangs up receiver. CLAYTON reaches out his right hand blindly. SEELIG takes it—holds it reassuringly and firmly. Gives CLAYTON a tonic slap on back and helps him rise. CLAYTON walks back to chair facing the fire.*]

SEELIG.

[*Solemnly.*] Frank! There is one moment in a woman's life—dazed by chloroform—wrung with pain—when her physician hears her speak the name of the man for whom she suffers. [*Pause.*] Every vestage of that doubt you uttered in my library must be effaced from your heart. [*Rings push button.*]

CLAYTON.

I didn't—*invent* the doubt.

SEELIG.

I know.

CLAYTON.

I think—[*Pause.*] I *hope* to God I'll get rid of it—in time.

SEELIG.

It mustn't mar this reunion. [*Pause.*] When I started for this house—I hoped—for what has occurred. [*Indicates 'phone.*] I didn't know just how it would come about—but I knew—that doubt had to be removed.

CLAYTON.

I don't want to think of it.

[*Enter* SUTTON.

SEELIG.

[*To* SUTTON.] A gentleman is outside in a cab, just behind my car? Ask him to come in.

[SUTTON *goes.* .

CLAYTON.

[*Quickly turning.*] Who is it? [*Pause.*] Who?

SEELIG.

I want you to be calm Frank.

CLAYTON.

Who??

SEELIG.

[*Calmly.*] The one you hate.

CLAYTON.

No! By God, no! [*Starts toward the hall.*]

SEELIG.

[*Interposing and catching him.*] Frank—if you had to go under the knife you'd trust me as a surgeon, wouldn't you?

CLAYTON.

[*Struggling to free himself.*] You're bungling this job.

SEELIG.

[*Still holding* CLAYTON.] I'm not bungling it.

[*Enter* DE LOTA.

CLAYTON.

Don't come in here.

DE LOTA.

Mr. Clayton—

SEELIG.

[*Between the two men.*] Speak only when I bid you—
[*Pause. To* CLAYTON.] Now listen! [*To* DE LOTA.]
Before Mr. Clayton introduced you to Mrs. Clayton a year ago—when had you last seen her?

DE LOTA.

About eight years before.

SEELIG.

That is nine years *ago*.

DE LOTA.

Nine years ago.

CLAYTON.

What's one *lie* more or less.

SEELIG.

Where were you *eight* years ago?

DE LOTA.

In France.

SEELIG.

[*Sternly.*] Where!

DE LOTA.

[*Pause.*] The prison *de La Santé*, in Paris.

SEELIG.

For how long a term?

DE LOTA.

One year.

SEELIG.

I asked you to bring your prison paper of discharge.
[DE LOTA hands paper to SEELIG. SEELIG regards paper and displays it to CLAYTON.] You read French—numerals at least. The date is there.

CLAYTON.

[*After a glance.*] Well?

SEELIG.

Also Mr. Burrill was in the court-room when Mr. De Lota was sentenced. [*Pause.*] To show this paper, to admit in your hearing—this fact has not been an easy thing for Benjamin De Lota to do. He does it at my urging—the appeal of one *Jew*—to another *Jew*. He is going—he lives by writing criticism. His signature to an article has a money value—and despite these personal mistakes, I believe his influence in print is wholesome. He leaves your magazines. Of course, he can't expect their recommendation, but I have *promised* him—*your silence*.

CLAYTON.

[*Pause.*] I shan't—[*Pause.*] Interfere.

[SEELIG turns—DE LOTA goes.]

SEELIG.

[*Hand on CLAYTON's shoulder.*] I'm proud of you—[*Pause.*] Now forgive an old practitioner who knew he had to cauterize quickly.

CLAYTON.

You're—a friend all right. [*Pause.*] Prison!

SEELIG.

That year.

CLAYTON.

And I made that rotten accusation. What a brute I've been!

S E E L I G.

My dear Frank, that also is yesterday. [*Pause and change of manner.*] Dick is coming to-night?

C L A Y T O N.

Yes.

S E E L I G.

And his mother—[CLAYTON *nods.*] I'll leave you alone.

C L A Y T O N.

I'd rather you were here.

S E E L I G.

I'll wait as long as I can. [*Consults watch.*]

C L A Y T O N.

[*Seated on couch.*] There's some troubling news for you.

S E E L I G.

For me?

C L A Y T O N.

[*Nodding.*] I'd like to cushion it if I could.

S E E L I G.

You mean *bad* news!

C L A Y T O N.

Depends.

S E E L I G.

[*Pause.*] Well—

CLAYTON.

[*Carefully.*] You know that—Vedah—rather fancied Burrill, don't you?

SEELIG.

Yes.

CLAYTON.

Burrill is sailing in a day or two—and—

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] Well?

CLAYTON.

Well—they've been—[*Pause.*

SEELIG.

[*Calmly.*] Married?

CLAYTON.

To-day.

[SEELIG *nods ruminatively.*

[*Enter* DICK.] [*Mrs. SEELIG and ELINOR appear in arch.*

DICK.

[*Running to* CLAYTON.] Papa!

CLAYTON.

Why, Dick boy!

[*Embraces him.* ELINOR *goes into the music room.* MRS. SEELIG *comes down.*

DICK.

[*To* SEELIG.] Did you give it to him?

SEELIG.

[*Still brooding.*] Yes.

DICK.

[*To CLAYTON.*] You like it?

CLAYTON.

You bet I liked it. [DICK *laughs*—CLAYTON *leading DICK toward the music room speaks to* MRS. SEELIG.] I told the Doctor.

MRS. SEELIG.

You mean—?

CLAYTON.

Vedah and Burrill.

[*Goes with DICK into music room.*]

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Coming to SEELIG's side.*] Samuel.

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] You knew it?

MRS. SEELIG.

I had no idea of it—but he has to cross the ocean. They love each other—Vedah was almost broken-hearted. We wanted Vedah to sacrifice her life to teach the idea of one God—but Samuel—[*Pause. Puts hand on SEELIG's arm.*]

SEELIG.

Well?

MRS. SEELIG.

The one God was wiser than my father, who was a Rabbi. He may be wiser than we are. [*Pause—SEELIG gently lifts*

her hand and kisses it. Pause.] Samuel—they're at home. Come forgive them and let's be happy at dinner. [SEELIG *shakes head.*] You mean you won't forgive them?

SEELIG.

[*Pause.*] I mean *only* that I can't come to dinner. There is a surgery case at the hospital.

MRS. SEELIG.

[*Pleading.*] Let someone else.

SEELIG.

[*Shaking head.*] Too important.

MRS. SEELIG.

Who is it?

SEELIG.

A little boy from the East Side. I don't remember his name, but the appointment is for eight thirty. [MRS. SEELIG *leaves his side.*

[ELINOR *enters*, CLAYTON and DICK *appear in doorway after her.* ELINOR *comes down to* SEELIG.

SEELIG.

It's all right?

[ELINOR *nods yes—takes SEELIG's face in both hands and kisses him.*

DICK.

[*To CLAYTON in childish treble.*] She kissed him—

CURTAIN.

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